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# STARS AND STRIPES®

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## Combat conditions on the Continent

PHOTOS BY BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

A soldier walks through a tent city on a military base in Powidz, Poland, on Tuesday. The tents and an old dorm house almost 600 U.S. military personnel on the installation.

### Military living deployment-style in Poland as future force takes shape

By JENNIFER H. SVAN  
*Stars and Stripes*

**M**ONTHS after Washington and Warsaw agreed to boost the number of American troops in Poland, questions remain about where they will come from, how many will eventually arrive and how long they will live in conditions that remind them of combat deployments.

President Donald Trump might address those issues in Poland this weekend when he visits Warsaw to commemorate the 80-year anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

While dignitaries attend the ceremonies in Warsaw, U.S. troops at Powidz, a base around 160 miles west of the capital that serves as a logistics and aviation hub for American military personnel training in Eastern Europe, will be living in a tent city with spotty internet service, water coming out of faucets at a trickle and a chow hall that serves ample field rations.

In summer, soldiers say they'd rather be in the air-conditioned tents than the hot barracks building, which doubles as workspace.



Sgt. Lauren Meza does pullups while Maj. Joshua Rookus lifts weights on base in Powidz on Tuesday. The soldiers deployed to the base are on rotations lasting up to nine months.

### AFGHANISTAN

## US troops will drop to 8,600

Trump: More than 5,000 will leave country when deal reached with Taliban

By COREY DICKSTEIN  
*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump said Thursday that the U.S. would pull more than 5,000 troops out of Afghanistan once it reaches an accord with the Taliban, though he seemed to rule out a complete withdrawal of American forces from the country's 18-year war.

"We're going to keep a presence there," Trump told Fox News Radio on Thursday morning.

"We're reducing that presence very substantially, and we're going to always have a presence. We're going to have high intelligence."

He said the U.S. would reduce its presence in Afghanistan — where American troops train and advise Afghan forces and conduct counterterrorism operations — from about 14,000 troops to about 8,600. The Pentagon did not immediately confirm the withdrawal plans, and officials said they were not anticipating such an announcement Thursday.

Trump did not indicate precisely when troops would begin exiting Afghanistan.

The president's statement came just one day after Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters at the Pentagon talks of any withdrawal were premature.

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# EUROPE



A stuffed duck named "Sgt. Duckyni" is operated on at the suture clinic for stuffed animals at Vilseck, Germany, on Wednesday.



## Sew cute

Army veterinarians get practice on stuffed animals at teddy bear clinic

By MARTIN EGNASH  
Stars and Stripes

VILSECK, Germany — Army veterinarians practiced their suturing techniques on stuffed animals this week in the second teddy bear suture clinic held here.

At least 16 animal care technicians from U.S. Army Garrison Bavaria participated in the exercise. They operated on several dozen stuffed animals that were brought in to the clinic, primarily by soldiers' families.

Sewing up the toys gives the veterinary technicians valuable training in suturing, a skill they

don't often get to practice, said Sgt. Toni Weaver, one of the technicians at the clinic.

"It's always different when the patient is alive and moving around, but it's still good to get hands-on experience like this," Weaver said. "And the place looks really cute with these [stuffed animals] everywhere."

After the success of the inaugural clinic last year, the exercise was expanded, with families from the Hohenfels and Ansbach military communities invited to bring their stuffed animals to Vilseck for care.

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Above: Sgt. Toni Weaver, an animal care technician at Rose Barracks, operates on her patient, "Rainbow Kitty," at the clinic for stuffed animals in Vilseck. Left: "Patients" wait in line at the teddy bear suture clinic.

PHOTOS BY MARTIN EGNASH/Stars and Stripes

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## MILITARY



PHOTOS BY MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes

Two squadron bump caps are displayed alongside a prototype Air Force bump cap at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Wednesday.

## Improved Osan bump cap provides comfort and protection for airmen

By MATTHEW KEELER  
Stars and Stripes

OSAN AIR BASE, South Korea — The 51st Fighter Wing's safety office came up with a simple and, it hopes, a popular solution to a problem that plagues aircraft maintainers across the Air Force.

From 2015 to 2017 Air Force maintainers reported 802 on-duty injuries from striking their heads on aircraft or weapons, injuries that cost the service nearly \$2.5 million in medical care and impacts on combat capability, according to data provided by the wing safety chief, Maj. Philip Budenbender.

The Air Force tried a prototype "bump cap" — an adjustable cap embroidered with the Air Force logo and fitted around a hard-shell dome — to protect the user's head. Bump caps, which provide some protection from minor bumps but not as much as a hard hat, are available in the civilian world.

However, the Air Force version proved unpopular.

"Airmen said it was cumbersome, obstructed views," Budenbender said Wednesday, "but, overall, people were just not too keen on the idea of wearing this type of hat."

The wing's flight safety non-commissioned officer, Master Sgt. Dustin Schwartz, came up with the idea of fitting the dome into something more familiar, a baseball cap.

"We brought up an idea, but this liner in this baseball cap that they already feel comfortable wearing and let's see how it does," Budenbender said. "What we ended up doing is pulling the liner out and putting it into a squadron-style baseball cap that is produced by the guys on the flight line and they enjoy wearing it off duty."

For the month of July, the wing



Airman 1st Class Chrisdien Scarlett, a crew chief with the 25th Aircraft Maintenance Unit, wears a bump cap as he inspects an A-10 Thunderbolt II at Osan Air Base, South Korea, on Wednesday.

safety team deployed three models of the protective insert to 26 airmen who performed daily operations on aircraft.

"During the 30-day trial, we had several head strikes that resulted in zero visits to the emergency room," Budenbender said.

The modified caps saved about \$43,000 in medical and other costs from 33 head strikes airmen reported during the trial, he added.

Senior Airman Austin Cline, of Assumption, Ill., an F-16 maintainer for the 51st Maintenance Squadron, was selected out of nearly 1,400 airmen to participate in the trial. He said the cap performed as expected when he bumped his head pretty hard on the door of an F-16 Viper's main landing gear.

"I thought I had clearance and came up and hit it," he said. "I might have split my head open."

Each aircraft presents its own hazards such as low-hanging antennas, sharp edges on weapons and wings, and pylons capable

of holding weapons or additional fuel. Depending on the severity of a head strike, an airman could be out of work for four days and on light duty until fully recovered.

"Any strike to the head, you have to consider the long-term effects as well, so it might not be immediate," Budenbender said.

The 51st Fighter Wing is still searching for a cap that features the best comfort, flexibility and breathability without compromising the airman's safety and effectiveness. It expects to present its findings at a safety symposium in October to see if Pacific Air Forces would incorporate the bump cap on a larger scale.

"It's an initiative; we try lots of things in the Air Force, and we try to cut back on injuries over the years," said Col. John Gonzales, commander of the 51st Fighter Wing. "I think we have a really good contender and a winner here."

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# Resiliency class helps combat suicide in Tokyo

By SETH ROBSON  
Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Spouses may spot suicidal tendencies or mental health issues that an airman hides at work, according to servicemembers and spouses involved in a resiliency workshop Thursday at the home of U.S. Forces Japan in Tokyo.

About a dozen Yokota-based Air Force spouses joined the workshop, which mirrored the sort of resiliency training airmen get, said 374th Operations Support Squadron 1st Sgt. Arthur Scruggs, who oversaw the event.

The gathering, which included sharing information on skills that help people cope while a servicemember is deployed, took place as the Air Force stands down units to focus on resiliency and suicide prevention on the orders of Chief of Staff Gen. David Goldfein.

In a video running on the American Forces Network this month, Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Kaleth O. Wright tells viewers that 78 airmen have died by suicide so far this year — 28 more than had taken their own lives at the same point in 2018.

Units at Yokota have been standing down this month, but the Air Force declined a request to observe the meetings.

Unit stand-downs will take place next month at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa. Three Kadena-based airmen have been found dead so far this year.

At Yokota, Scruggs and the spouses met in private but were available to speak ahead of the workshop.

Spouses see servicemembers in a different light, Scruggs said.

"They will recognize mental health issues that people at work might not see," he said.

However, spouses sometimes tell their servicemember that their military career "is more important than mental health and that's a mistake," he said.

One of the spouses who participated in the workshop, Sunshine Burgess, 43, of Leland, Miss., echoed Scruggs' comments.

"As spouses, we are going to notice if our [airman] is acting differently," she said. "They are probably going to hide that in the workplace."

A servicemember who attended the workshop, air traffic controller Staff Sgt. Suzi Twilley, 27, of Arcadia, Fla., said her husband, also an airman, recently deployed to the Middle East.

Twilley said she had plenty of support at Yokota during the deployment.

"The other spouses were constantly checking up on me, and my work family also checked up on me," she said.

Resilient spouses can help airmen deal with stress at work, said Burgess, who has been an Air Force wife for 20 years.

"It is a cycle," she said. "If the spouses are more resilient and less prone to depression it makes it easier to have a happy home. If you have a happy family life and have that kind of safety of being able to go home and get away from everything else."

Burgess said it can be tough for spouses at overseas duty stations.

"I had my first child overseas before social media with no family around, so I have gone through what a lot of younger people will go through," she said.

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TERON GOBOLLO/Stars and Stripes

Sunshine Burgess, left, attends a resiliency workshop with other Air Force spouses at Yokota Air Base, Japan, on Wednesday.



## MILITARY

# Citizenship change hits some military kids

By CAITLIN M. KENNEY  
Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Servicemembers and civilians stationed overseas who have a child who is not an American now face a new process when applying for the child's citizenship under policy changes announced Wednesday.

The new policy, which goes into effect Oct. 29, addresses the definition of "residence" in the Immigration and Nationality Act and affects children of servicemembers and civilians living abroad who did not acquire citizenship at birth or while they were living in the United States. These children will no longer be considered "residing in the United States," one of the ways for anyone born overseas to obtain citizenship automatically.

The policy update announced

by the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services is estimated to affect between 20 and 25 people annually. The estimate is based on data compiled by USCIS during the last five years from overseas applications with Army or Air Force Post Office and Fleet Post Office mailing addresses, according to a USCIS official who spoke Thursday about the policy change on the condition of anonymity.

As of June 30, more than 200,000 servicemembers and Defense Department civilians are permanently assigned overseas, according to Defense Department data. The number does not include U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, Syria, or Iraq.

But the announcement of a citizenship policy change triggered widespread confusion Wednesday

night about what it meant and who would be affected.

"This policy update does not affect [children] born a U.S. citizen, period. This only affects children who were born outside the United States and were not U.S. citizens," Ken Cuccinelli, the acting director of USCIS, said Wednesday in a statement. "This does not impact birthright citizenship. This policy update does not deny citizenship to the children of U.S. government employees or members of the military born abroad."

Under Section 320 of the Immigration and Nationality Act, a child who was born outside the United States can automatically become a citizen if they are physically living in the United States with their parent who is a citizen. This section no longer applies for those children living overseas with their parent. The policy up-

date now requires parents who are stationed overseas with their child to file Form N-600K, "Application for Citizenship and Issuance of Certificate Under Section 322," to apply for citizenship on behalf of the child before he or she turns 18 years old. Parents who submit an application for citizenship before the policy change will have it considered under the old policy.

Parents who are U.S. citizens and whose child is born overseas at a military base or at an off-base hospital outside of the United States can submit for a Consular Report of Birth Abroad to the State Department or a Certificate of Citizenship from USCIS for their child to be a citizen at the time of their birth, according to a USCIS document about the policy change.

Military bases outside of the

United States are not considered within the United States for birthright citizenship, so children gain citizenship through their parents, according to USCIS.

The change in the policy guidance was made because it conflicted with the definition of "residence" in the Immigration and Nationality Act, according to the USCIS document. Children of servicemembers were considered residing in the United States under INA 320 and also residing outside of the United States under INA 322, Mariolu Cabrera, a spokeswoman with USCIS, wrote in an email.

The guidance now clarifies these children are considered living outside of the United States.

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Left: Marine Maj. Sam Wuornos; his wife, Christine; and daughters Evie, 7, and Ella, 4, show off a project they completed from a USO Family Activity Box at Camp Foster, Okinawa, on Wednesday. Right: The USO says its Family Activity Box program "affords military families a customized and connective experience for both parents and children."

## USO family event proves popular

By AYA ICHIHASHI  
Stars and Stripes

### CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa

— The first Family Activity Box event sponsored by the USO on Okinawa proved to be such a hit the organization has already scheduled another.

Initially, 25 families signed up for Wednesday's event at the USO on Camp Foster. However, 61 families expressed interest, so another event has been scheduled Sept. 18 for the remaining 36, said center manager Angela Tom.

"Family Activity Box is a care package program that affords families a customized, connective family experience," she said.

A box assembled "by hand" by USO staff and volunteers provides items for the whole family along with age-specific comfort items selected by the USO, she said. Those include stuffed animals with a pacifier for infants, crayons for kids and journals for teenagers.

Dozens of boxes bearing family

names were waiting when families arrived at 5 p.m. Inside were four activities designed to bring families closer along with "table topics" cards for family-time conversation starters.

In one activity, called "when we feel so apart," family members painted four individual tiles and then joined them together to make one piece of art.

Christine Wuornos, 32, of New York, mother to Ella, 4, and Evie, 7, told Stars and Stripes that her husband, Maj. Sam Wuornos, 34, of Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 265 at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma, just returned from 2½ months on deployment.

"This program is a great opportunity to spend time together and connect with the family," said Wuornos, who attended Wednesday's event with her husband and kids.

Two military and family life counselors were also on hand to listen to families experiencing

hardships.

Participating families also took advantage of "Pasta Wednesday" at the USO during the family box event.

Tom said she hopes to grow the program, which the USO officially launched last winter, and enable other centers on Okinawa to host them in the future.

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PHOTOS BY AYA ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes

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## MILITARY



BRANDY N. MEJIA/Department of Defense

Defense Secretary Mark Esper meets with sailors during a visit to the USS South Dakota Graving Dock in Groton, Conn., on Tuesday.

## Esper touts subs' role in keeping pace with China, Russia

By JULIA BERGMAN

The (New London, Conn.) Day

GROTON, Conn. — Defense Secretary Mark Esper, a month into the job, toured Electric Boat in Groton on Tuesday, including a walkthrough of the Navy's newest attack submarine, USS South Dakota, which is undergoing a major upgrade to make the already stealthy submarine even quieter in response to continued advancement by China and Russia in their undersea fleets.

Esper's focus of late has been on China, which is increasingly staking a claim in the Indo-Pacific region, and which recently tested multiple anti-ship ballistic missiles. He told a crowd at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., earlier in the day that the Pentagon is looking at ways to increase its presence in the region.

Addressing a group of EB workers and crew members of the South Dakota, Esper said the U.S. is back in an era of great power competition.

"The Russians and Chinese have been at it for a while and we've kind of missed the ball, but we're back on our game right now," he said.

Where the U.S. has a distinct advantage, he said, is in its submarine fleet — "well-built machines of war, if you will."

"We have to maintain that overmatch, and that means we have to continue to grow the fleet and build capabilities into each version," Esper said.

Officials have spoken generally about the improvements being made to the South Dakota, such as quieter machinery, a hull coating that will better absorb sound, and new sonar capabilities to improve threat detection. South Dakota is considered the test ship for the improvements, and any insights gained will drive future technological advancements.

Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., who invited Esper to tour

EB, said Esper responded to him at the end of the visit "the need to prioritize undersea warfare and the submarines made here because it's an area where we are clearly ahead of our adversaries and where that superiority makes all the difference."

Sens. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., and Jack Reed, D-R.I., and Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont also attended Tuesday's tour.

Blumenthal said he thought Esper's visit would lead to further investment in the U.S. submarine fleet. Nine attack submarines are currently under construction between EB's facilities in Groton and Quonset Point, R.I., company President Jeffery Geiger said Tuesday.

At one point during the tour, Esper asked Geiger, after Geiger had explained EB's construction process, whether the Russians "build subs this way ... because they build good subs." Russia builds its submarines in a similar fashion, Geiger said, and while its submarines are advanced, it does not have a lot of them.

China, for its part, is expected to have a fleet of 70 submarines — both diesel and nuclear — by 2020, and "that number is going to continue to grow as they're getting more proficient in submarine construction," said Rep. Joe Courtney, D-Conn., who also attended Tuesday's tour.

Esper is "picking up" where former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis left off — "in terms of highlighting the challenge that exists in the Indo-Pacific region with China's posture out there," Courtney said.

Submarines, given their stealth, are able to operate in that environment unimpeded, he said. That's what's driving the work at EB, he said, "this new strategic reality that the submarine fleet is uniquely positioned to lead the way."

# US carried out cyberstrike on Iran to protect shipping

By ELLEN NAKASHIMA  
AND PAUL SONNE  
The Washington Post

American military cyber forces in June knocked out a crucial database used by Iran's elite paramilitary force to target oil tankers and shipping traffic in the Persian Gulf hours after that force shot down an unmanned U.S. surveillance drone, according to U.S. officials.

The retaliatory strike by U.S. Cyber Command against the system used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was approved by President Donald Trump, who that same day called off a military airstrike against Iran because killing Iranians would not be "proportionate to shooting down an unmanned drone."

U.S. Cyber Command did not address questions on the secret operation. "As a matter of policy and for operational security, we do not discuss cyberspace operations, intelligence, or planning," Elissa Smith, a Pentagon spokeswoman, said in a statement.

The operation was first reported by The New York Times. It has not been publicly acknowledged by the U.S. government.

The cyberstrike was in the works for weeks if not months, officials have said, adding that

the Pentagon proposed launching them after Iran's alleged attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman earlier in June.

The cyber response to a military shootdown of an unmanned drone shows how the Pentagon is expanding its repertoire of options to integrate cyber into military plans, said officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe a sensitive operation.

It also shows how CYBERCOM, which coordinated the strike with U.S. Central Command, which oversees the Middle East, is able to support regional commanders to achieve strategic aims — in this case to preserve freedom of navigation in one of the world's most important shipping lanes.

The cyberstrike was designed to be debilitating — Iran is still trying to restore data — but proportionate and not so provocative as to result in escalation, officials said.

"When you're in this realm there's always the chance for miscalculation," said one official, adding "there were concerns generally about Iranian responses," perhaps against U.S. or Israeli interests. But the feeling was the strike would not lead to a retaliatory spiral, the official said.

The cyberoperation did not target missile and rocket launch systems, as The Washington Post

previously reported, said U.S. officials.

It nonetheless represents a flexing of offensive muscle by Cyber Command, led by Gen. Paul Nakasone, which was elevated to a full combatant command in May 2018. It leveraged new authorities, granted by the president, that have streamlined the approval process for such measures.

Iran said the drone flew into its airspace, while the United States said it was in international airspace.

"To the extent that Iran is conducting unlawful operations, I think [the cyberstrike] was an appropriate measure to take to preclude their ability to conduct further unlawful operations," said Michael Schmitt, international law professor at the U.S. Naval War College. "Sometimes cyberspace allows you to take operations that are not as escalatory as other options on the table. And this would strike me as one such operation."

Jason Healey, a former White House and military cyber official, said that though such operations may prove less escalatory, they may also encourage U.S. adversaries to imitate them.

"China might say, 'You did it to Iran, we're just doing it to Taiwan. What are you getting so upset about?'"

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## MILITARY

# Dunford: Most troops avoid partisan displays

BY DAN LAMOTHE  
AND MISSY RYAN  
The Washington Post

WASHINGTON — The United States is in a “very politically turbulent time” that has required military officials to address displays of partisanship by some U.S. troops, the Pentagon’s top general said Wednesday, emphasizing that the majority of servicemembers have acted professionally.

“With very few exceptions, they have conducted themselves in a manner very consistent with our ethos and with our values,” said Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. “They have done exactly what we’ve asked them to do, by and large.”

Dunford, who is expected to retire next month, did not list

any of the incidents in question. But some servicemembers at public events have displayed banners, hats and flags featuring the “Make America Great Again” political slogan favored by President Donald Trump. Such displays violate military regulations designed to enforce political neutrality in uniform.

Dunford and Defense Secretary Mark Esper appeared before an overflow crowd of dozens of reporters in the Pentagon press briefing room in the first event of its kind this year, a reflection of turmoil after former defense secretary Jim Mattis’ resignation in December over differences of agreement over how Trump treats U.S. allies.

On Wednesday, The Wall Street Journal published an essay adapted from Mattis’ upcoming

book in which he wrote that he “did as well as he could for as long as he could.” Mattis warned that tribalism is dividing the nation and “that our democracy is an experiment — and one that can be reversed.”

The Pentagon’s current top leaders have expressed warm feelings for Mattis in the past but did not address his criticisms directly Wednesday, saying that they are trying to keep the military out of politics by avoiding partisanship themselves.

“I’ve worked very hard to remain apolitical and not make political judgments,” Dunford said, adding that doing so is “not in my lane.”

“I will not now, nor will I, when I take off the uniform, make judgments about the president of the United States or the commander

in chief,” he added. “I just won’t do it.”

The Pentagon officials addressed a wide range of other issues in the hourlong news conference, including the future of the war in Afghanistan, relations with Turkey and tensions between the United States and Iran.

On Iran, Esper expressed cautious optimism that Washington and Tehran may be on a better path than in June when Iran shot down a U.S. Navy surveillance drone over the Strait of Hormuz and the Pentagon nearly responded with a strike on Iranian targets before Trump called it off.

Esper said he is “not sure I’m ready to call the crisis over yet, but so far so good.”

The Pentagon chief also reaffirmed a line he has drawn in regard to Turkey buying the S-

400 missile defense system from Russia. The purchase prompted the Pentagon to cancel Turkey’s involvement in the F-35 program, preventing the NATO ally from flying any of the U.S. military’s most advanced jets in the future.

Esper, asked whether Turkey could obtain F-35s if the nation promised to put the S-400 in warehouses, said “not in my book.” But the United States will reevaluate its position if Turkey acknowledges it made a mistake and gets rid of the Russian system, he said.

“I’ve been very clear, in both my public comments and privately with my Turkish counterpart, it’s either the F-35 or the S-400,” Esper said. “It’s not both. It’s not park one in the garage and roll the other one out. It’s one or the other.”

## Esper: VA to take lead on care for potential service-linked cancer

By TARA COPP

McClatchy Washington Bureau

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs will take the lead on improving access to medical care for military members exposed to potentially cancer-causing compounds during their service, Defense Secretary Mark Esper told reporters Wednesday.

In response to a question about the rising number of cancers in the military that could be connected to compounds servicemembers were exposed to while deployed overseas or during training, Esper acknowledged the role of both the Pentagon and VA may grow.

“That is one of the areas where I want to improve and make sure

we are doing everything we can to assist soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines as they transition out of the service into the VA system,” Esper said.

“VA has the lead on this,” he added.

Earlier this year, the military service organization TAPS said that the top cause driving new survivors to join its organization will soon be military member cancer deaths. TAPS, the Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, is a support organization for spouses and family members who have lost a service member.

The Pentagon will continue to take the lead on addressing the number of military bases and communities with ground and well water contaminated by per-



MANUEL BALCE CORNETA/AP

Secretary of Defense Mark Esper, left, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford speak at a briefing at the Pentagon on Wednesday. Esper said the Department of Veterans Affairs “has the lead” on assisting military personnel with possible service-related cancer.

and polyfluoroalkyl, or PFAS, compounds, which are cancer-linked chemicals found in the military’s firefighting foam.

There’s already some momentum within the Pentagon and

Congress to address the impact of Aqueous Film Forming Foam, which has been used since the 1970s to fight aircraft fires.

The foam has concentrated amounts of PFAS compounds that

are linked to cancers and birth defects.

The compounds are found in everyday household products but are concentrated in firefighting foam.

## Troops: US servicemembers will continue Afghanistan fight until deal reached

### FROM FRONT PAGE

The United States’ top military officer said removing American forces from Afghanistan would be tied to guarantees of lower levels of violence from the Taliban.

Afghan forces now require American military power to keep from being overwhelmed by the Taliban, Dunford said. However, the general said, the war was outlasting U.S.-Taliban negotiations would result in a reduction of violence across the country as well as an agreement for the insurgent group to negotiate a peace deal with the central Afghan government.

Senior State Department and Taliban officials in recent days have indicated the two parties have inched closer to an agreement to end American involvement in the nation’s longest war.

“I am not using the withdraw word right now,” Dunford said Wednesday during a televised news conference alongside De-

fense Secretary Mark Esper, the first such briefing held at the Pentagon in a year. “I am using: We’re going to make sure that Afghanistan is not a sanctuary (for terrorists) and we’re going to try to have an effort to bring peace and stability to Afghanistan.”

Trump is a longtime critic of the war in Afghanistan, with top officials have conceded has been stalemated for at least four years. Trump has pledged since he was a candidate in 2016 to bring home American troops. In recent days, he has said any withdrawal would be based on security conditions in the country, but he also decried U.S. forces mission there as a “ridiculous” police operation.

Trump repeated his critique Thursday morning.

“We’re not fighting a war over there — we’re just policemen,” he said. “We could win that war so fast if I wanted to kill 10 million people ... but I don’t. I’m not look-

ing to kill a big portion of that country.”

Nonetheless, 2019 has proven the deadliest year for American troops in Afghanistan since 2014, when former President Barack Obama announced a formal end to the U.S. combat mission there in exchange for a more subdued operation aimed at training and advising Afghan forces. Fourteen American servicemembers have died in combat in Afghanistan this year, including two Green Berets killed last week in a raid on Taliban forces.

Dunford and Esper declined to provide specific details about the ongoing Doha talks, referring questions to the State Department. However, they said that until an agreement is reached, the United States would continue to fight the Taliban alongside its Afghan partners.

Their comments came just days after the top State Department official negotiating with the Taliban, Zalmay Khalilzad, strongly denied Taliban-issued statements

that the United States could cut ties with the Afghan government as a result of a bilateral agreement between the parties.

“Let me be clear: We will defend Afghan forces now and after any agreement [with] the Taliban,” Khalilzad wrote Monday on Twitter. “All sides agree Afghanistan’s future will be determined in intra-Afghan negotiations.”

The Taliban have publicly denied they are willing to negotiate with the Afghan government, which the group has dismissed as an American puppet regime. However, Khalilzad, Dunford and Esper indicated such dialogue would be a cornerstone of any U.S.-Taliban agreement.

“The key to resolve this conflict is a political agreement” between Afghan factions, Esper said Wednesday. “We’re on that path right now.”

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## EUROPE

## Poland: Soldiers see improvements to temporary housing areas

## FROM FRONT PAGE

"In terms of living and working, it feels a lot like an immature deployment," said Army 1st Sgt. Sean Jones, the first sergeant for 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, an Apache unit out of Fort Riley, Kan., which is at Powidz for a nine-month rotation.

"Of course, we are prepared to go to an austere environment and fight the enemy and train or whatever else," he said.

"But this is a rotation, not a deployment."

Improvements to the areas temporarily hosting U.S. troops in Poland are slowly coming, soldiers said.

At Poznan, American troops are hosted at a small base in the historic city, with a metro area of more than 1 million and a large population of college students who speak English well. Air conditioning is being installed on base for some 80 soldiers who live and work in an old concrete building.

"We all have between two to three roommates," said Sgt. Jennie Banks, 25, a human intelligence collector with the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley.

Buildings are being renovated to house soldiers and provide them with places "to do our jobs and protect forces in the area," said Maj. Jon Allen, a spokesman for the Mission Command Element, a headquarters based in Poznan that oversees rotational forces in Europe.

But before major infrastructure projects begin, "we need to know how many people are going to be in which places on a permanent basis," Allen said.

## Handling uncertainty

It's still uncertain if the Pentagon will establish a division headquarters at Poznan or elsewhere in Poland.

The U.S. mission already includes a rotational Army armored brigade, a U.S.-led multinational



PHOTOS BY BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

Soldiers deployed to the Polish military base in Powidz are served food at the dining facility on Tuesday.

NATO battlegroup positioned near the Russian military exclave of Kaliningrad and an Air Force detachment at Lask. A small contingent of sailors are at Redzikowo, a northern Polish town near the Baltic coast, where work on a missile defense site continues.

Experts say the presence of U.S. forces in Poland can deter Russia, which countries in Eastern Europe and the Baltic region have eyed warily since it seized Crimea from Ukraine in 2014.

"The U.S. would be in position to introduce its forces into a crisis area and then Russia would have to make the choice of killing American soldiers if it wanted to go to war, and that would have huge political consequences," Michael Kofman, a Wilson Center fellow, said in a phone interview.

Where an additional 1,000

troops that the U.S. will deploy to Poland will come from, a decision announced in June, is also up in the air.

U.S. diplomats and officials have suggested they may come from Germany. The U.S. ambassador to Germany and others have criticized Berlin for not meeting a NATO target calling for each alliance member to spend 2% of gross domestic product on defense by 2024.

Pulling troops from Germany and placing them in Poland "would be a real mistake," said retired Lt. Gen. Ben Hodges, the former commander of U.S. Army Europe.

"Germany is our most important ally in Europe," Hodges said by phone. Bases provided to the U.S. in Germany allow the American military to forward deploy

from halfway around the world, he said.

"To be able to replicate the quality of training facilities, maintenance facilities ... plus, by the way, our dependence on civilian employees ... working in Europe, you can't just pick them up and move them," Hodges said.

Hodges added that he does support rotating noncombat troops into Poland and he has long advocated for infrastructure improvements in Eastern Europe to aid allied military movements.

## Big plans and a big lake

For now, many of the projects in Poland are designed to support military operations, not quality of life.

Outside Powidz, one of the largest airfields in Europe, a swath of

forest has been cleared to make way for a NATO-funded \$260 million storage site for tanks and other U.S. combat vehicles.

A munitions bunker and rail-head improvements are also in the works, said Maj. Ian Hepburn, executive officer for the Maine National Guard's 286th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, part of the current task force at Powidz.

A diagram in Hepburn's office details the plans, including moving the logistics operations area, "where everyone lives, eats, sleeps, does maintenance," closer to the airfield with new facilities.

"I think there's a commitment to it but no actual funds yet," he said.

Army Capt. Dustin Martin, the 286th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion headquarters company commander and Powidz base mayor, said plenty of projects are underway, from improvements to the motor pool area to the front entry control point. "But nothing to improve the necessities," he said.

Despite the challenges on post, servicemembers say they welcome the opportunity to experience a country that feels safe and seems to appreciate having Americans there.

The natural attractions and local food are also a draw.

Spc. Dominic Pisco, 25, civil affairs specialist with the Army Reserve 407th Civil Affairs Battalion, said the sailboat-dotted lake near the base in Powidz reminds him of home in Minnesota. He's enjoyed trying pierogies and Zurek, a Polish rye soup with sausage and eggs.

He's even managed to squeeze in a trip to Italy on a long weekend.

For Hepburn, who said he grew up as the Cold War was nearing an end, "It's fascinating to be over here ... in an area once behind the Iron Curtain.

"It's almost like history is repeating itself."

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ANDREA VILLARI/Stars and Stripes



Soldiers walk out of the supply support activity facility on a military base in Powidz on Tuesday.



## MILITARY

# Russian-Turkish talk of new jets adds to tension

BY AMIE FERRIS-ROTMAN  
AND KAREEM FAHIM  
The Washington Post

MOSCOW—Russia and NATO-member Turkey are in talks over the possibility of creating a new fighter jet, Russian government officials said Wednesday, a step that could further challenge the United States and Ankara's standing in the Western military alliance.

The move came as President Vladimir Putin hosted his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, at a major Russian aviation show on the outskirts of Moscow, a meeting which served mainly as a showcase for the two leaders' burgeoning partnership.

The two sides held "technical consultations" on the joint creation of a fighter jet as well as "initial talks" on developing a Turkish fighter aircraft, Russian media cited officials from Russia's Federal Service for Military Technical Cooperation as saying. The body reports directly to Putin.

No additional details were provided. But the discussions, though tentative, are likely to raise further alarms in Washington, which has strenuously protested against Turkey's recent purchase of the S-400 Russian missile defense systems.

U.S. officials worry Russia could use the S-400s in Turkey to gather intelligence on Ameri-

ca's F-35 fighter jet. In response, the United States has canceled Turkey's participation in the production and purchase of the F-35 American stealth aircraft.

Meanwhile, members of the U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee urged President Donald Trump on Tuesday to level further sanctions on Turkey for the purchase.

Turkey is already developing its own stealth fighter, which could be operational as early as 2025, Turkish officials have said. In Moscow, Erdogan and Putin also discussed cooperating in the field of "electronic warfare" at a moment of heightened vigilance in the West over Russian cyberattacks.

The optics suggested Turkish-Russian relations were growing warmer. In a video clip that went viral, Putin bought himself and Erdogan ice cream cones. (The Russian leader opted for chocolate, while Erdogan preferred vanilla).

The pair then admired Russia's newest fighter jet, the Sukhoi Su-57, which was unveiled at the show, with Erdogan getting a peek inside the cockpit. Erdogan joked about purchasing the Su-57 but stopped at that.

The Russian space agency Roskosmos even offered to send a Turkish astronaut to the International Space Station.

But behind the scenes, there



MAXIM SHPENKOV/AP

**Russian President Vladimir Putin, left, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan inspect a Sukhoi Su-57 fifth-generation fighter during the MAKS-2019 International Aviation and Space Show in Zhukovskiy, outside Moscow, on Tuesday.**

was no sign that the two countries had resolved their disagreements over the war in Syria.

Russia, the main military backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad, has supported Syria's monthslong offensive in the country's northern Idlib province, along the border with Turkey.

The Syrian advance has killed Turkish soldiers stationed as observers in Idlib and sent hundreds of thousands of displaced Syrians toward the Turkish border, raising fears in Ankara of a new influx of refugees.

Earlier this month, a Turkish military convoy was bombed in Idlib in an attack that Turkey partly blamed on Russia.

At a joint news conference on Tuesday, Erdogan and Putin did

not attempt to paper over their diverging views of the violence in Idlib.

Erdogan called the Syrian government's attacks, which have killed hundreds of civilians, "unacceptable," adding that they were "strengthening radical elements."

Putin acknowledged an "escalation of the violence" but blamed it on "radical elements" attacking Russian bases and the Syrian population as a whole.

Erdogan's courting of Russia has laid bare the rapid decline of Turkey's relationship with the United States, over a litany of perceived slights and grievances.

The two governments have argued over the White House's refusal to extradite a Turkish cleric

blamed by Erdogan's government for helping fuel a failed coup in 2016. Turkey also objects to U.S. support for a Syrian-Kurdish force allied with the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or PKK, which has fought a long insurgency against Turkey.

"The root cause of the problem is that both America and Turkey see each other as a fundamentally destabilizing actor in the Middle East," Aaron Stein, the director of the Middle East Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, wrote earlier this month in an essay about the tortured negotiations between Ankara and Washington over policy in Syria.

## Navy housing survey shows poor rank for Hampton Roads

BY COURTNEY MAREUS  
The (Norfolk, Va.) Virginian-Pilot

The Navy wanted to know how sailors and their families living in privatized military housing felt about their homes.

Turns out, those in Hampton Roads are less satisfied than most. Their experiences with their homes and the company that manages them, Lincoln Military Housing, ranked 40th out of 42 installations for overall satisfaction, according to the results of a national survey.

Across the country, the Navy's housing scored 70 for overall satisfaction, or "average," according to the survey, which was completed by CEL & Associates.

CEL distributed 35,125 surveys among residents in family housing, with a total 8,416 responses, or 24%. A total 3,960 surveys were distributed in Hampton Roads, with 22% response.

Local respondents gave their housing an overall score of 61, or "poor," according to the survey. They also scored their service 61 and gave their property a 59, or "very poor."

That's down from 2018 when naval bases throughout Hampton Roads scored an

**Local respondents gave their housing an overall score of 61, or "poor." They also gave their property a 59, or "very poor."**

### Navy housing survey

overall 77 and a 75 for property and a 78 for service.

The service contracted the survey during the spring after widespread complaints across the military of shoddy living conditions, poor maintenance and bad customer service prompted congressional hearings. Previous surveys had been conducted by the privatized housing providers, prompting some residents to complain that they felt coerced into giving inflated responses.

Navy Region Mid-Atlantic commander Rear Adm. Charles Rock said the result "only goes to validate what we've been hearing from some of our residents."

Lincoln has added several improvements, including beefing up staff, creating a mobile app to make it easier for residents to track service requests, increasing outreach and developing a hotline that residents can use to phone concerns directly

to company President Jarl Bliss, the company said.

Based on the survey's results, the Navy's housing providers must develop corrective action plans for any neighborhoods that score 75 or below. Though neighborhood-level data was not released with the survey, Navy Region Mid-Atlantic spokeswoman Beth Baker said all of Hampton Roads' Navy neighborhoods, which number about two dozen, scored below 75.

The survey stated that declines in scores may have been the result of the negative publicity generated amid public outcry.

In addition to Lincoln's changes, Rock said he now views data every two weeks that tracks residents' satisfaction with work orders as well as their move-in experience. He said he's seen some improvement. The Navy is also planning to hire nearly 150 people to provide oversight of

privatized housing across the service; 32 of them will work in the Mid-Atlantic region, which extends from Wisconsin through North Carolina.

Lincoln is also working with a mediator in Hampton Roads to work things out when a resident and the company hit an impasse, Rock said.

The Navy contracts with several companies to manage its housing following a 2005 agreement to privatize military housing. Lincoln manages about 4,400 units in Hampton Roads.

Warner took aim at those 50-year contracts. "Ultimately, if you don't have the ability to renegotiate the lease, you're not going to be able to hold these companies accountable," he said in a phone interview. Warner and Sen. Tim Kaine have pushed for reforms in the upcoming defense bill that would, among other things, allow the families to withhold their housing allowances if they're in a dispute over housing conditions.

Kaine has previously toured homes around the Naval Station Norfolk and near Fort Belvoir. In a statement Monday, he called the housing conditions "intolerable."

## NATION

# Attacks by extremists prompt debate on domestic terrorism

By Andrew Selsky  
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. — A white man opens fire at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, targeting Mexicans and killing 22 people. Another man kills 11 Jewish worshippers at a synagogue in Pittsburgh.

The two mass shootings and a presidential tweet put a spotlight on the idea of domestic terrorism, adding momentum to a debate about whether such attacks should be classified and tried in the same way as crimes against America by foreign extremist groups and their supporters.

A Republican senator and a Democrat in the House of Representatives are drafting bills to do that while some Republicans call for a left-wing group to be designated a terrorist organization.

"Domestic terrorism is in our backyard and we need to call it and treat it under the law the same as other forms of terrorism," said U.S. Sen. Martha McSally, an Arizona Republican who intends to introduce legislation when Congress returns in September.

McSally's proposal would allow federal law enforcement to charge suspects with acts of do-

mestic terrorism and add punishments for those crimes, including the death penalty.

Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat, introduced legislation on Aug. 16 that he says is a "very high priority."

"The goal is to put domestic terrorism at the same level of priority as ISIS- or al-Qaida-inspired terrorism, since Americans on American soil now are just as likely, if not more likely, to die at the hand of a domestic terrorist motivated by some hateful ideology like white supremacy," Schiff said in a telephone interview.

Separately, two Republican senators are calling for an antifascist movement known as antifa to be designated as a domestic terrorist organization.

The push comes after clashes between white supremacists and antifa in Portland, Ore., which drew a tweet from President Donald Trump suggesting domestic terrorism designation for antifa but not the white supremacists. Such a designation does not currently exist.

While a push to rethink what should be deemed terrorism gains some momentum, it has sparked concerns about infringe-

ment of constitutional rights. It's also not clear whether the debate will be embraced in a bipartisan way, though McSally said this week that her bill has received "a lot of positive feedback ... from both sides of the aisle."

Schiff said he hopes for "bipartisan support for an effort to put the full weight of the federal government behind the prosecution of people committing these hateful acts of domestic mass terror."

Meanwhile, Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas is working on "legal mechanisms" that would enable domestic terrorist organizations to be treated like those on the State Department's list of foreign extremist groups, his spokeswoman, Maria Jeffrey, said in an email.

Cruz and Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-Louisiana, introduced a resolution on July 18 condemning antifa and calling for it to be designated as a domestic terrorist organization.

As antifa activists prepared to square off against far-right demonstrators in Portland, Ore., on Aug. 17, Trump tweeted that "major consideration is being given to naming ANTIFA an 'ORGANIZATION OF TERROR.'"

Currently, only foreign groups



MATT ROURKE/AP

**A person pauses in front of memorials to those killed in a shooting at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh in October. Such mass killings in the U.S. have prompted a debate over domestic terrorism.**

can be labeled terrorist organizations. The U.S. State Department maintains that list, currently comprising 68 groups — none of which is white supremacy.

It is a crime for a person in the United States to knowingly provide "material support or resources" to a foreign terrorist organization.

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon, said he doesn't believe Congress should enable the executive branch to designate groups as domestic terrorists.

"I wouldn't trust this administration to exercise such power in an unbiased and judicious manner," Merkley said.

The Anti-Defamation League says antifa hasn't been accused

of any murders, and that there is no comparison between the loosely organized movement and the white supremacist groups it sometimes clashes with. Antifa uses "unacceptable tactics" but rejects racism, while white supremacists use more extreme violence to intimidate minorities, the ADL said.

Schiff denounced Trump's tweet as "a disservice to our efforts to combat domestic mass terror."

"I see it as the same destructive political posturing we've come to expect from the president, that would argue white supremacists' hate is not the problem; antifa is the problem," Schiff said.

## US, Mexico widen asylum crackdown to push back all migrants

By Maria Verza  
and Nomaan Merchant  
Associated Press

NUEVO LAREDO, Mexico — A Trump administration program forcing asylum-seekers to wait in Mexico has evolved into a sweeping rejection of all forms of migrants, with both countries quietly working to keep people out of the U.S. despite threats to the migrants' safety.

The results serve the goals of both governments, which have targeted unauthorized migration at the behest of President Donald Trump, who threatened Mexico with potentially crippling tariffs earlier this year to force action.

Some people sent to wait in the Mexican border cities of Nuevo Laredo and Matamoros said they never requested asylum, including Wilfredo Alvarez, a laborer from Honduras.

He crossed the Rio Grande without permission to look for work to support his seven children and was unexpectedly put into the program. He was sent back to Mexico with a future court date.

"We thought that if they caught us, they would deport us to our country, but it was not that way," Alvarez said. "They threw us away here to Mexico, but we are not from here and it's very difficult."

Others said they were never asked if they feared persecution in Mexico, despite U.S. government rules that say migrants should not be sent there if they face that risk.

U.S. border agents give each returned migrant a date for an immigration court hearing at tents set up near the border. But the Mexican government has bused hundreds of migrants to cities around 1,000 miles away, ostensibly for their safety. There's no promise that Mexico will bring



MARCO UGARTE/AP

**Migrants wait at an immigration center on International Bridge 1 in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, in July. Some migrants say their safety has been threatened by a program forcing those seeking asylum in the U.S. to wait in Mexico.**

migrants back.

Instead, Mexico is offering to return many Central Americans to the Guatemala border, and others are choosing to leave at their own expense.

A priest running a shelter in Nuevo Laredo called the process a form of "undercover deportation."

"It's a way to send them to a country that's not theirs and save money," Aaron Mendez said. "And Mexico has not said one word."

Two weeks after speaking to The Asso-

ciated Press, Mendez was kidnapped by armed men who entered the shelter. He is still missing.

The effort to keep migrants in Mexico is officially called the "Migrant Protection Protocols," but it's better known as the "Remain in Mexico" program. Announced as a plan to crack down on asylum claims, it has been in effect since January and was expanded in July to the eastern end of the U.S.-Mexico border.

In that region, on one side of the border is South Texas' Rio Grande Valley, where

border agents apprehend more migrants crossing illegally than in any other section. On the other side is the state of Tamaulipas, known for its cartel-linked violence and corruption. Tamaulipas is the only U.S.-Mexico border state that the U.S. government warns Americans not to visit due to safety concerns.

The U.S. has said at least 32,000 people have been sent back. Mexico says around 5,500 people have been sent to Nuevo Laredo and 3,000 people to Matamoros.

Migrants in Mexican border cities said they were told they would receive help when they were sent back to Mexico, a promise that for many has not been kept.

Thirteen people told the AP they were not asked for any information about their cases by U.S. border agents.

"They only asked for a name, a fingerprint, and then 'out,'" said Blanca, a Guatemalan woman who was sent back to Nuevo Laredo in July with 15 relatives. Blanca asked that her last name be withheld due to fear that she would be harmed.

She said she was prepared to tell border agents that gang members had killed her sister, leading the rest of her family to flee. She brought paperwork documenting the attack, but said, "We couldn't even show them."

Jodi Goodwin, an immigration attorney in Harlingen, Texas, has agreed to represent for free 11 cases involving people waiting in Matamoros, including three families and a pregnant woman from Peru. Goodwin persuaded border agents on Sunday to allow the pregnant woman inside the U.S. as well as a woman accompanied by a baby with Down syndrome.

The next day, she said, the pregnant woman had been sent back to Mexico.

## MILITARY

# Hurricane Dorian expected to grow on way to Florida

BY FREIDA FRISARO  
AND ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON  
Associated Press

MIAMI — Leaving mercifully little damage in its wake in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, a strengthening Hurricane Dorian posed an increasing menace to Florida on Thursday as it swirled toward a possible direct hit on the state over Labor Day weekend.

Along much of Florida's east coast, shoppers rushed to stock up on food and emergency supplies at supermarkets and hardware stores and picked the shelves clean of bottled water. Lines formed at service stations as motorists topped off their tanks and filled gasoline cans.

Forecasters said Dorian is expected to bulk up into a dangerous Category 3 storm, meaning winds of at least 111 mph, or perhaps even a catastrophic Category 4, at 130 mph or more, before broadsiding the U.S. on Monday somewhere between the Florida Keys and southern Georgia — a

500-mile stretch that reflected the high degree of uncertainty this far out.

President Donald Trump said Florida is "going to be totally ready." He tweeted: "Be prepared and please follow State and Federal instructions, it will be a very big Hurricane, perhaps one of the biggest!"

As of late Thursday morning, Dorian was centered about 220 miles northwest of San Juan, Puerto Rico, its winds blowing at 85 mph as it moved northwest at 13 mph.

Also imperiled were the Bahamas, with Dorian's projected track running just to the north of Great Abaco and Grand Bahama islands.

The storm is expected to pick up steam as it pushes out into warm waters with favorable winds, said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy, adding: "Starting tomorrow, it really has no obstacles left in its way."

"If it makes landfall as a Category 3 or 4 hurricane, that's a



RAMON ESPINOSA/AP

**A woman poses for a photo in front of ocean waters and a Puerto Rican national flag after the passing of Tropical Storm Dorian in the Condado district of San Juan, Puerto Rico, on Wednesday.**

big deal," he said. "A lot of people are going to be affected. A lot of insurance claims."

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis declared a state of emergency, and local governments distributed sandbags. Some residents used community Facebook groups for updates on grocery stores getting new shipments of water.

At NASA's Kennedy Space Center at Cape Canaveral, officials debated whether the mobile launch platform for the new mega rocket under development should be moved indoors.

Dorian blew through the Virgin

Islands and Puerto Rico as a Category 1 hurricane on Wednesday.

Puerto Rico seemed to be spared any heavy wind and rain, a huge relief on an island where blue tarps still cover some 30,000 homes nearly two years after Hurricane Maria. The island's 3.2 million inhabitants also depend on an unstable power grid that remains prone to outages since it was destroyed by Maria.

Several hundred customers were without power across Puerto Rico, said Angel Figueroa, president of a utility workers union. Police said an 80-year-old man in

the town of Bayamon died after he fell trying to climb to his roof to clear it of debris ahead of the storm.

Dorian caused an island-wide blackout in St. Thomas and St. John in the U.S. Virgin Islands and scattered outages in St. Croix, government spokesman Richard Motta said.

No serious damage was reported in the British Virgin Islands, where Gov. Augustus Jaspert said crews were already clearing roads and inspecting infrastructure by late Wednesday afternoon.



CHARLIE RIEDEL/AP

**Oil industry and environmental groups say they expect the EPA to issue a proposed rule that will roll back requirements on detecting and plugging methane leaks at oil and gas facilities.**

## US proposing easing rules on oil emissions

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Oil and gas companies may face far looser oversight of emissions of potent climate-changing methane gas under a proposal expected from the Trump administration as soon as Thursday, oil industry and environmental groups said.

The government's plan would ease requirements on oil and gas sites to monitor for methane leaks and plug them.

The Environmental Protection Agency's move would be the latest in a series by the administration easing Obama-era emissions controls on the oil, gas and coal industries, including for methane.

Under President Donald Trump, both the Interior Department and the EPA have proposed a series of rules — some blocked

by courts — to loosen regulations of methane emissions.

Environmental advocates expected the new methane plan to go further than previous proposals, with a goal of exempting companies from requirements to detect and stop methane leaks at existing oil and gas sites.

For the EPA, part of the goal is "they want to get rid of direct regulation of methane," said Matt Watson, a vice president of the energy program at the Environmental Defense Fund, an advocacy group.

The administration rollbacks on emissions from oilfields, storage sites and pipelines have split the oil industry, worrying some in the industry about growing blowback in a world increasingly mindful of climate change.

## FDA: Low risk in tainted blood pressure drug

BY MATTHEW PERRONE  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — U.S. health officials on Wednesday tried to reassure patients that they face very low risks from ongoing contamination problems with widely prescribed blood pressure drugs.

Drugmakers have issued more than 50 recalls since last July linked to low levels of a probable cancer-causing chemical found in generic drugs taken by millions of Americans. The contamination underscores the Food and Drug Administration's struggle to police an industry that increasingly relies on overseas manufacturing plants in China and India.

On Wednesday, an FDA official said the actual risk to patients from the tainted medications is likely lower than originally stated.

The FDA said last year that if 8,000 patients took the maximum dose of the drugs for four years, the contamination issue could cause one extra case of cancer over their lifetimes.

The agency now says that the actual risk to patients is likely much lower than this "worst case scenario." That's because most patients likely "received much smaller amounts of the impurity," because not all blood pressure drugs on the market contain the hazardous chemicals.

The FDA's drug center director, Janet Woodcock, said patients

should continue taking their medication because the risk of untreated high blood pressure and heart failure "greatly outweighs the potential risk of exposure to trace amounts" of contaminants.

The affected medications are low-cost versions of lifesaving heart-regulating drugs, including valsartan, losartan and irbesartan. They are designed to allow blood to flow more easily and are sold as single-ingredient pills and tablets and in combination with other drugs.

The FDA is responsible for ensuring that U.S. medicines are produced in safe, sanitary conditions that meet quality standards. But regulators have struggled for years to inspect the supply chain as pharmaceutical production spread globally.

For decades the FDA focused its manufacturing inspections on U.S. factories. More than 90% of the drugs prescribed in the U.S. are generics, and over time, most companies have moved their manufacturing overseas to take advantage of cheaper labor and materials. Today roughly 80% of the ingredients used in U.S. medicines are made abroad, according to the Government Accountability Office.

The FDA did not open its first permanent offices in China and India until 2008 and 2009, respectively. That followed dozens of deaths and hundreds of aller-

gic reactions in the U.S. linked to a contaminated blood thinner made at a Chinese facility.

The FDA has tried to keep pace with foreign inspections. But when the GAO's watchdog investigators last examined the issue in 2016, they estimated the FDA had never inspected nearly 1,000 of the 3,000 foreign manufacturing facilities that export drug ingredients to the U.S.

Earlier this summer House lawmakers asked the FDA to provide information about its oversight of facilities in China and India linked to the recent recalls.

"We remain concerned about whether FDA has the appropriate resources, policies, management practices, and authorities to oversee adequately foreign drug manufacturing," members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce wrote in a June letter to the FDA.

On Wednesday, Woodcock noted that the FDA recently issued a warning letter to an India-based manufacturer, Lantech Pharmaceuticals, over traces of a carcinogen found at one of its facilities. The FDA said the company failed to "control and monitor" its manufacturing to prevent the chemical from making its way into pharmaceutical shipments.

The FDA notes that 43 blood pressure medications have not been affected by the contamination issues.



## NATION

# Deadline passes for Dems' debate

By BRIAN SLODYKO

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Struggling Democratic presidential candidates are facing the bad news that they are not among the 10 who have qualified for the next debate, a predicament that is likely to spell doom for their campaigns.

Hours ahead of a midnight Wednesday deadline to qualify, New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand announced she was dropping out of the race after spending at least \$4 million on advertising in recent months to qualify.

Billionaire climate change activist Tom Steyer, Montana Gov. Steve Bullock and self-help guru Marianne Williamson were also among those missing September's debate, as were Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet, Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard and a handful of others.

To appear on stage in Houston next month, they had to hit 2% in at least four approved public opinion polls while securing 130,000 unique donors. Two new polls released Wednesday affirmed that they were all below the threshold.

The question shifted from who would qualify for the following debate to who would stay in the race.

"Our rules have ended up less

inclusive ... than even the Republicans," Bullock said on MSNBC, referring to the thresholds set by the Democratic National Committee. "It is what it is."



Gillibrand

The 10 candidates who qualified for September's debate are Joe Biden, Cory Booker, Pete Buttigieg, Julian Castro, Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, Beto O'Rourke, Bernie Sanders, Elizabeth Warren and Andrew Yang.

In a still-crowded Democratic field, not qualifying for the debate was expected to severely cripple a candidate's prospects. However, several have pledged to forge on in hopes of reaching the requirements in time for the next debate, in October.

Although earlier debates had lower thresholds, the DNC raised the stakes for the fall debates.

"We believe you need to show progress in your campaign," said Democratic Party spokeswoman Xochitl Hinojosa. "There hasn't been one candidate in 40 years who has polled under 2%

the fall ahead of a primary and has gone on to be the Democratic nominee."

The DNC designed the requirements to bring order to an unwieldy field of more than 20 White House hopefuls while elevating the role of online grassroots donors who are among the party's most fervent supporters.

In some ways, the party has succeeded. But the process has drawn complaints from those unlikely to make the cut. They argue that the rules are arbitrary and have forced candidates to pour money into expensive online fundraising operations that can sometimes charge as much as \$90 for every dollar raised.

Bennet said the threshold favored Steyer, and a memo by his campaign accused the billionaire of trying to buy his way into the debate. "Other candidates have had to spend millions to acquire donors on Facebook, instead of communicating with voters and laying the groundwork to beat" President Donald Trump, the Bennet campaign memo stated.

Steyer, a late entry in the race, was the closest to qualifying but acknowledged Wednesday night that he too had fallen short.

"While I'm disappointed that I won't be on the debate stage in Houston this month, I'm excited

by all the support you've shown us," he tweeted to supporters.

In a separate letter to Democratic Party Chairman Tom Perez, Bennet's campaign asked how the DNC decided which polls to allow and questioned why Democrats were trying to narrow the field months before Iowa caucuses.

Hinojosa said candidates have had ample time to build support and reach the thresholds.

"We are asking Democratic candidates to hit 2% in four polls. That is not a high threshold," said Hinojosa, who added the DNC is accepting the results from 21 polls.

Steyer and Gillibrand both poured millions of dollars into Facebook and TV ads to boost their standing in recent months. While Steyer met the donor threshold, he was one poll shy. Gillibrand was three polls away and had yet to lock in enough donors.

Gabbard was two polls away from qualifying, and Williamson was three polls away.

Several others who struggled had already chosen to drop out. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, Massachusetts Rep. Seth Moulton and former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper all recently ended their campaigns.



Lawrence O'Donnell

## MSNBC host: Russia story an 'error in judgment'

Associated Press

NEW YORK — MSNBC's Lawrence O'Donnell said Wednesday he made an "error in judgment" in reporting about supposed Russian ties to President Donald Trump's finances without verifying the story.

O'Donnell's admission came in a tweet Wednesday after a lawyer for Trump said the story was false and defamatory and called on NBC News to apologize and retract it.

MSNBC had no comment on any potential disciplinary action for O'Donnell, saying he would address the matter on Wednesday's show.

O'Donnell said in his tweet that the story, which led Tuesday night's broadcast, "didn't go through our vigorous verification and standards process. I shouldn't have reported it and I was wrong to discuss it on the air."

He said on the show that he'd been told that Deutsche Bank had documents showing that Russian oligarchs had co-signed loans for Trump. He said the report came from a single source, who he didn't identify. The documents also supposedly reveal that Trump paid little in taxes, he said.

Even as O'Donnell talked about his story, he coughed it several times, saying "if true."

"That would explain, it seems to me, every kind word that Donald Trump has ever said about Russia and Vladimir Putin, if true, and I stress the 'if true' part of this," he said on the air.

It exhibits a stunning lack of rigor for a news organization that was pounced upon by Trump's lawyers. In a letter to Susan Weiner, NBC Universal's general counsel, and Daniel Kummer, the company's senior vice president for litigation, Trump lawyer Charles Harder called O'Donnell's statements "false and defamatory, and extremely damaging."

Harder said Trump is the only guarantor for the loans. He said it was information that was publicly recorded and could be found by an online search.

The president's attorney threatened legal action if NBC did not apologize and correct the report.

O'Donnell has been hosting "The Last Word" on MSNBC since 2010.

## Biden: Family, work are separate

By BILL BARROW

Associated Press

SPARTANBURG, S.C. — Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden said Wednesday that in all his decades in public office, he has never talked to any family members about their private business dealings. And he promised "an absolute wall" between government and his family's financial interests should he be elected president.

Biden's remarks followed scrutiny of the business activities of his son Hunter and his brother James — a spotlight that Republicans, including President Donald Trump, have been eager to shine on Democrats' 2020 polling leader.

"I have never discussed with my son or my brother or anyone else anything having to do with their businesses. Period," Biden told reporters at a campaign stop in South Carolina.

Politico reported earlier this year that Hunter and James Biden sometimes tried to leverage Joe Biden's political tie to attract investors for a hedge fund.



MIC KINNARD/AP

**Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden looks over the selection at a Krispy Kreme shop Wednesday in Spartanburg, S.C. Biden responded to scrutiny of business activities by his family members by saying that he never talks to members of his family about their business interests.**

Trump's allies, including former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani and Republican Party operatives, also have highlighted Hunter Biden's service on the board of an energy firm owned by a Ukrainian oligarch at the same time that Joe Biden played a key role in the Obama administration's Ukraine policy.

The Washington Examiner newspaper reported earlier this week that the younger Biden's decision to join the board of Buris-

ma Holdings in 2014 was enough to make his business partner Christopher Heinz, the stepson of then-Secretary of State John Kerry, raise questions with the State Department and later cut business ties with Hunter Biden.

Joe Biden's campaign answered that Trump simply wants to deflect from his own conflicts of interest from foreign business deals.

Biden said that he'd impose the same standards in his adminis-

tration that were in place when he served as President Barack Obama's second-in-command.

"There will be an absolute wall between personal and private and the government," he said. "There wasn't any hint of scandal at all when we were there, and I will impose the same kind of strict, strict rules."

"That's why I never talk with my son or my brother or anyone else in the distant family about their business interests, period."

## NATION

# Feds warn against pot use by youth, pregnant women

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Federal health officials issued a national warning Thursday against marijuana use by adolescents and pregnant women, as more states legalize the increasingly potent drug for medicinal and recreational use.

Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar and Surgeon General Jerome Adams made the announcement, with Azar calling marijuana "a dangerous drug."

Officials said President Donald Trump has donated \$100,000 — one-quarter of his annual government salary — toward a digital campaign to raise awareness of the risks. Trump has forgone his official salary since taking office. The warning comes as legal marijuana has grown into a \$10 billion industry in the U.S., with nearly two-thirds of states legalizing it, mainly for medical uses. An increasing number of states and localities are also allowing personal recreational use.

Contending the opioid epidemic is a top issue for the White House, but marijuana had not gotten such high-level attention.

Adams said science shows that marijuana is harmful to the developing brains of teenagers and to the human fetus. The drug has also gotten stronger, with a threefold increase in the concentration of the active ingredient THC in cultivated plants over the last 20 years.

"This ain't your mother's mari-

juana," Adams said.

While many states have changed their marijuana laws, federal law still treats it as a controlled substance akin to opioids.

Federal officials say they fear the trend toward legalization may make it more enticing for teenagers to try marijuana. It's a commonly used drug among youths, they said, along with alcohol and e-cigarettes.

No states allow legal marijuana use by teens.

Adams said that for teens it carries a risk of affecting brain development, which continues in the 20s. Frequent marijuana use by teenagers is associated with changes in parts of the brain that are involved with attention, memory, decision-making and motivation.

Among pregnant women, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug, with about 7% reporting they had used it within the past month in a 2017 study.

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Academy of Pediatrics advise women not to use marijuana during pregnancy and to discontinue the drug if they find out they are pregnant.

HHS Assistant Secretary for Health Brett Giroir said pregnant women taking marijuana to relieve morning sickness should stop.

"If you have morning sickness, talk to your physician," he said.

**Among pregnant women, marijuana is the most commonly used illicit drug, with about 7% reporting they had used it within the past month.**

2017 study



J. SCOTT APPLEWHITE/AP

The Justice Department's inspector general says former FBI Director James Comey, above, violated FBI policies by sharing memos he wrote about his private conversations with President Donald Trump.

## Watchdog finds Comey violated FBI policies in handling of memos

By ERIC TUCKER  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — James Comey violated FBI policies in his handling of memos documenting private conversations with President Donald Trump in the weeks before he was fired as director of the bureau, the Justice Department's inspector general said Thursday.

The watchdog's office said Comey broke FBI rules by giving one memo containing unclassified information to a friend with instructions to share the contents with a reporter. Comey also failed to notify the FBI after he was dismissed in May 2017 that he had retained some of the memos in a safe at home, the report said.

But the inspector general also concluded that none of the information shared with the reporter was classified.

At issue are seven memos Comey wrote between January 2017 and April 2017 about conversations with Trump that Comey found unnerving or unusual. Those include a dinner at

which Comey says Trump asked him to pledge his loyalty to him and a private Oval Office meeting weeks later at which Comey says the president asked him to drop an FBI investigation into former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

One week after he was fired, Comey provided a copy of the memo about Flynn to Dan Richman, his personal lawyer and a friend, and instructed him to share the contents of it with a specific reporter from The New York Times.

Comey has said he wanted to make details of the conversation public in hopes of triggering the appointment of a special counsel to lead the FBI's investigation into ties between Russia and the Trump campaign. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller was appointed special counsel one day after the story broke.

The inspector general's office found Comey's rationale lacking.

"Comey had several other lawful options available to him to advocate for the appointment of a

Special Counsel, which he told us was his goal in making the disclosure," the report says. "What was not permitted was the unauthorized disclosure of sensitive investigative information, obtained during the course of FBI employment, in order to achieve a personally desired outcome."

The department has already decided not to prosecute Comey over the matter.

Richman declined to comment Thursday. But Comey noted on Twitter that the inspector general found no evidence that he or his lawyers had ever shared any classified information with the news media.

"I don't need a public apology from those who defamed me, but a quick message with a 'sorry we lied about you' would be nice," he wrote.

He added, "And to all those who've spent two years talking about me 'going to jail' or being a 'liar and a leaker' — ask yourselves why you still trust people who gave you bad info for so long, including the president."

## Deaths caused by drivers running red lights is at 10-year high

Associated Press

DETROIT — The number of people killed by drivers running red lights has hit a 10-year high, and AAA is urging drivers and pedestrians to use caution at traffic signals.

In 2017, the latest figures available, 939 people were killed by vehicles blowing through red lights, according to an AAA study of government crash data.

It's the highest death toll since 2008 and 28% higher than in 2012. AAA says two people are killed every day in the U.S. by drivers who don't stop for the signals.

"Drivers who decide to run a red light when they could have stopped safely are

making a reckless choice that puts other road users in danger," David Yang, executive director of AAA's Foundation for Traffic Safety, said Thursday.

AAA isn't sure why the numbers are on the rise or why they have increased at a far higher rate than overall U.S. roadway deaths. Since 2012 the overall number of highway fatalities rose 10%, far short of the 28% increase in red-light running deaths.

There are more people driving more miles since the Great Recession, but that doesn't explain why red-light deaths are increasing at a faster rate, said Brian Tefft, senior researcher for the AAA Foundation. He said he suspects distracted driv-

ing played a role, as did traffic lights that weren't timed optimally, perhaps with a yellow caution cycle that's too short.

"I wish we had a better answer than we do," he said, adding that the answer was beyond the scope of the data in the study of fatal crash data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

In its analysis, AAA also found that 28% of crash deaths at intersections with signals happened because a driver ran a red light.

The automobile club recommends that governments increase use of red light cameras directly supervised by authorities in order to boost enforcement where needed

and not to raise revenue.

It also says drivers should prepare to stop as they are entering an intersection and tap their brakes while approaching a light to warn other drivers of a possible stop. AAA also recommends waiting a second after a light changes to green before proceeding and checking to make sure crossing traffic has stopped.

For pedestrians and cyclists, AAA recommends taking a few seconds to make sure traffic has stopped before crossing a street. It also says to be visible, make eye contact with drivers and stay alert by not wearing headphones while walking or riding.

## NATION

# Program seeks better prison visits for kids

By PAT EATON-ROBB  
Associated Press

ENFIELD, Conn. — Myles Brown remembers how visits with his dad used to be.

There was glass between them. They had to use a phone to talk. It was kind of scary. He didn't always want to go.

On Monday night, Myles, 11, was again inside a prison visiting Christopher Brown, 25, who is serving a 3-year sentence on firearms charges. But this time he and his sister, Chloe, 7, got to dance with their dad, play games, eat pizza and laugh. Dad also got to hold his 10-month-old daughter, Amelia.

"It really means a lot," said Myles. "Now, I get to hug him. It was like we lost a bond and here we get to try and rebuild it."

The family dance at the Willard-Cybalski Correctional Institution is part of a prison pilot program from the National Institute of Corrections called Family Connections, which is being tried out at Cybalski and at prisons or jails in New York, Wisconsin, Texas and Oregon.

The idea is to make it easier for parents inside to connect with their children and to resume the role of mother or father once they are released.

"We need to be there to support the families," said Trina Sexton, the Correction Department's director of reentry services. "The families did nothing wrong. Incarceration is not just affecting the mother or father who's in. It's affecting the entire family unit. So, how can we make that better?"

The program takes different forms in different prisons. At Cybalski, the last stop for prisoners before they reach their release dates, the visiting room has been repainted green and pink and the inmates are creating a giant mural of a white birch tree. It will be stocked with toys and games.

Guards are receiving training on how to interact with young children and teenagers to create a more welcoming environment,



BRAD HERRIGAN, HARTFORD COURANT/AP



PAT EATON-ROBB/AP

**Above:** Inmate Michael Hudson, right, of Norwalk, Conn., dances with his son, Malakhi, left, and daughter, Mesiah, center, during a family dance night Monday at the Willard-Cybalski Correctional Center in Enfield, Conn. **Left:** Inmate Gregory Canepa Sr., of Tolland, Conn., left, and his son, Gregory Jr., participate in a family dance.

and the inmates are taking parenting classes.

"They give you different skills

to bring home and techniques to use with the kids because you've missed a lot of their life," said

Gregory Canepa Sr., who has a parole hearing soon. He spent the evening playing and dancing with

his 5-year-old son, who shares his name. "I feel like I'm absolutely ready to be his dad," he said.

In other states, changes can be as simple as revising the forms inmates fill out when they enter to system to include information about their families, said Alina Martinez, a program manager with Community Works-West, a research and advocacy group that provides training for the Family Connections program. That allows the prison system to know which inmates are eligible for family services or programs both inside and outside of prison.

Other prisons are allowing contact visits for the first time.

"Most of these changes are low-hanging fruit," Martinez said. "They tend to be low-cost and high impact. Research has shown that if inmates have a better tie to their families, more of a connection, they are less likely to return to prison and they are more likely to have success with reentry."

About 5 million children in the United States have a parent in prison.

Connecticut Correction Commissioner Rollin Cook said he hopes to expand the family program to other prisons in the state.

"Every one of us relies on our family when we need something, need help or start something new," he said. "It's also so important for the kids to have these people in their lives. We want to begin that process."

Jy'ajia Wells, 7, had been counting down the days to the dance and the opportunity to see her dad, TySon Wells.

"I will give him a hug," she said.

Her father, who is serving time for robbery, said it has been two years since they were last able to do that. He is hoping to be released from prison after a parole hearing later this week.

"I will do everything I can do to be the best father I can be," he said. "This has given me motivation to go out and do the right thing. I want to show her that we can be a family and I love her."

## Tourists alerted to rolling balls of poop in Great Smoky Mountains

By MARK PRICE  
The Charlotte Observer

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — In what may be the oddest public notice ever issued by the National Park Service, tourists are being alerted that brown balls seen rolling across trails in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park are animated animal poop.

Yes, bear, deer and raccoon dookie is moving, seemingly on its own.

Closer inspection, however, reveals dung beetles, also known as tumblebugs, are the ones behind the balls of "crap," which they roll around as part of their birthing process, according to a National Park Service Facebook post.

"It's like they always say: 'When life gives you crap ... roll it into a ball, lay an egg inside it, bury it, and use it to nourish your offspring,'" the post explains. "At least, that's what dung beetles and tumblebugs do."

Anyone who thinks the canthon beetles are cute should keep in mind they also like to eat poop, according to N.C. State University researchers.

As if to prove beetles are moving the poop, the park service posted a video of one of the bugs using its back legs to roll a perfectly formed ball across a trail. Off to one side can be seen the pile of scat (and a few flies) from which the ball was carefully crafted.

The video has been viewed nearly 10,000 times since Friday, and inspired many puns, from "waste not want not" to "this is a bunch of crap."

Female tumblebugs lay one egg each in their dung balls, so the larvae can develop "without having to compete with their siblings" for nourishment, according to the National Park Service.

"The male will help bury the balls of dung in the ground for safe keeping," the park service says.

In doing so, the beetles also do hikers the service of keeping trails free of aromatic decomposing animal dung, park officials said.



VIDEO SCREENSHOT COURTESY OF GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK/TNS

This tumblebug is one of the several beetles found in the Smokies that rely on animal waste to complete their life cycle.



## WIRED WORLD

# Tesla owner has chip implanted to control her car

By PETER HOLLEY  
The Washington Post

Last year, after placing an order for Tesla's recently unveiled Model 3, Amie Dansby began to ponder an ambitious idea.

Because of its many high tech features, she knew the car was regularly compared to a computer on wheels. Dansby — a software engineer from Dallas — wondered whether it might be possible to control that mobile computer the way a growing number of people are controlling other devices, opening doors, turning on lights and retrieving food from vending machines: with a microchip implanted in her body.

Some people laughed when she detailed her dream, and others told her it was impossible, a sentiment, she said, that only strengthened her resolve.

"I realized that nobody had ever done it with a Tesla, and that made it so much more of a challenge that I wanted to overcome," said Dansby, 34, who began formulating a plan about a year ago. "But it's one of those things that's so new there's nothing on Google to help you."

To the uninitiated, Dansby's desire to control her surroundings with an implanted microchip might sound like it was plucked from some dystopian future. But microchips aren't exactly new and have been used to tag "pets and livestock" as well as track deliveries.

A growing number of companies and people are also opting to outfit their bodies with technology that monitors their health, controls nearby electronic devices or even lights up when activated for

aesthetic purposes.

Biohax International, a Swedish company, has implanted its microchip in several thousand customers, allowing them to ride trains without using tickets, turn on the lights in their apartments and access a gym the company has partnered with. The company claims the microchips are used only to enhance systems that are "completely under your control."

Proponents of medical microchips point out that the devices could contain someone's entire medical history. If a patient were unconscious or suffering from memory loss, for example, those records could prove invaluable for emergency room doctors who might be unfamiliar with the person's prescribed medications or history of illness.

Critics say the practice raises serious privacy concerns, especially when considering who would be responsible for the mountains of personal data that microchips are capable of producing about an individual's movement, behaviors and health.

When she decided that she wanted to place a chip in her arm that would allow her to control her Tesla, Dansby already had an RFID implant in her left hand that gives her basic access to her personal computer and lets her open her front door. (An RFID chip is a chip that uses radio frequency signals to exchange information.)

Dansby initially considered syncing that chip to her Tesla as she just don't like. People are blurring the lines," said Jerry Ellig, a professor at George Washington University's Regulatory Studies Center who was a policy official at the Federal Trade Commission.

Companies operating social media platforms have long enjoyed broad legal immunity for posted content. Under the 1996 Communications Decency Act, they have a legal shield for both the content they carry and for removing postings they deem offensive. But if social media posts, uploaded videos, user reviews of restaurants or doctors, or classified ads — the shelter from lawsuits and prosecution has been a tent pole of social networking and undoubtedly contributed to its growth.

But in the current climate of hostility toward Big Tech, that legal protection is get-

ting a second look.

Legislation proposed last spring by Republican Sen. Josh Hawley, of Missouri, an outspoken conservative critic, would require the companies to prove to regulators that they're not using political bias to filter content. Failing to secure a bias-free audit from the government would mean a social media platform loses its immunity from legal action.

Hawley's legislation drew pushback from Michael Beckerman, who heads the major trade group Internet Association. He said it forces the platforms "to make an impossible choice: either host reprehensible, but First Amendment-protected speech, or lose legal protections that allow them to moderate illegal content like human trafficking and violent extremism. That shouldn't be a tradeoff."

The bias issue has dogged Silicon Valley for years, though there's been no credible evidence that political leanings factor into



Amie Dansby photos

**Above:** Amie Dansby, a software engineer in Dallas, shows off a microchip that she has implanted inside her right arm, next to a Lego stormtrooper for scale. The chip allows her to unlock and start her Tesla Model 3. **Below:** After three doctors turned her down, Dansby found a body modification specialist to implant the chip.



vehicle owners to access and start their car. To do that, she dissolved the key card in acetone until the plastic casing disappeared, leaving the chip.

Dansby had the chip encased in a biopolymer, a natural material that can safely remain under her skin like the silicon that is used for breast implants. That, she

said, is when the hard part really began.

"The longest part of this whole process was emailing doctors who didn't want to risk losing their medical license," Dansby said, noting she'd entered talks with three doctors, all of whom eventually backed out.

After six months of searching,

Dansby turned to a tattoo shop that specializes in body modifications, where a professional piercer inserted the implant into her right arm just beneath her wrist through a hollow needle.

A few days later, after her arm had healed, Dansby was able to unlock and start her car with a wave of her arm.

Her appendage has to be just a few inches from the vehicle for the chip to be effective because its range is limited.

The entire process, including research, took about a year, she said.

"People think chips in your body are weird, but we think Botox and breast augmentation or Lasik are normal — and those are all body modifications," she said. "Imagine how it must have felt to be one of the first people who decided to put two silicon implants in their chest and now it's so completely forgettable."

## Social media content conundrum: How to handle offensive posts

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Take the post down. Put it back up. Stop policing speech. Start silencing extremists.

That's just a sampling of the intense, often contradictory demands facing tech companies and their social media platforms as they try to oversee internet content without infringing on First Amendment rights. The pendulum has swung recently toward restricting hateful speech that could spawn violence, following a mass shooting in Texas in which the suspect had posted a racist screed online.

For Facebook, Google, Twitter and others, it's a no-win whipsaw, amplified by a drumbeat of accusations from President Donald Trump and his allies that their platforms are steeped in anti-conservative bias. With lawmakers and regulators in Washington poring over their business practices, the tech companies are anxious

to avoid missteps — but finding criticism at every turn.

"There's a thin line between disgusting and offensive speech, and political speech you just don't like. People are blurring the lines," said Jerry Ellig, a professor at George Washington University's Regulatory Studies Center who was a policy official at the Federal Trade Commission.

Companies operating social media platforms have long enjoyed broad legal immunity for posted content. Under the 1996 Communications Decency Act, they have a legal shield for both the content they carry and for removing postings they deem offensive. But if social media posts, uploaded videos, user reviews of restaurants or doctors, or classified ads — the shelter from lawsuits and prosecution has been a tent pole of social networking and undoubtedly contributed to its growth.

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The bias issue has dogged Silicon Valley for years, though there's been no credible evidence that political leanings factor into

Google's search algorithms or what users see on Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.

That's done little to silence critics on the right, including at the White House, where Trump promised at a "social media summit" last month to explore "all regulatory and legislative solutions to protect free speech and the free-speech rights of all Americans." No details were given.

Some critics of Big Tech say the industry's woes are partly of their own making. Having championed their commitment to free speech, the argument goes, their users weren't prepared for the reality that content, at times, will be restricted.

"They were insisting they were neutral, or just technology platforms," said Eric Goldman, a law professor at Santa Clara University and co-director of its High Tech Law Institute.

That argument was persuasive, until disappointment set in.

## WORLD

# Johnson's Parliament plan met with major opposition

By DANICA KIRKA  
Associated Press

LONDON — Political opposition to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to suspend Parliament crystallized Thursday amid protests, legal action and a petition to block the move which has gathered more than 1 million signatures.

Johnson's maneuver gives his political opponents even less time to prevent a chaotic no-deal Brexit before the Oct. 31 withdrawal deadline. The decision outraged critics and is serving as a unifying force for the disparate opposition, who have confirmed they will press on with measures to block a departure from the European Union without a deal despite Johnson's actions.

"We will seek to try and put through the appropriate legislation in this constrained timetable that the government has now put

before us," said Barry Gardiner, the opposition Labour Party's spokesman on international trade.

Thousands packed College Green outside Parliament on Wednesday evening, waving EU flags and placards to express their anger. Smaller rallies took place in other towns and cities while 25 bishops from the Church of England released an open letter about their worries about the "economic shocks" of a no-deal Brexit on the poor and other vulnerable people.

A petition on a government website demanding that Parliament not be suspended has gotten more than 1 million signatures — guaranteeing that it will be considered for debate.

Legal challenges loom. Lawmakers already are asking a Scottish court to rule that suspending Parliament is illegal. Businesswoman Gina Miller, who won a

ruling in the Supreme Court in 2017 that stopped the government from triggering the countdown to Brexit without a vote in Parliament, has another legal challenge in the works.

House of Commons leader Jacob Rees-Mogg dismissed the fury and described Johnson's move as constitutional and proper.

"I think the outrage is phony and it is created by people who don't want us to leave the European Union and are trying very hard to overturn the referendum result and don't want the benefits



VOUD XHUMSHITI/AP

**A protester chants anti-Brexit slogans as London Metropolitan Police aim to shut down a demonstration blocking the Houses of Parliament square in central London on Wednesday.**

of leaving the European Union," he told the BBC.

"This is completely constitutional and proper," he said. "There is going to be a lot of time to debate before Oct. 31."

The move has prompted ruptures across the political spectrum, including among members of Johnson's Conservative Party.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson, who has differed with Johnson in the past, resigned Thursday. Though the popular leader cited family reasons, the timing of such a decision following Johnson's seismic move suggested that she disagreed with his tactics.

## WHO: Major increase of measles in Europe

Associated Press

LONDON — The World Health Organization says there has been a "dramatic resurgence" of measles in Europe, in part fueled by vaccine refusals, with nearly 90,000 people sickened by the virus in the first half of 2019.

In a report issued Thursday, the U.N. health agency said the number of measles cases from January to June this year is double the number reported for the same period in 2018.

Measles is among the world's most infectious diseases and is spread mostly by coughing, sneezing and close personal contact.

Although numerous European countries have introduced stronger vaccination policies, stubborn pockets of vaccine refusal have fueled epidemics across the continent. Last month, the German government proposed making measles immunization mandatory for children and employees at kindergartens and schools; there have been more than 400 cases of measles in Germany this year.

With more than 84,000 cases, Ukraine accounted for the vast majority of measles in Europe, followed by Kazakhstan and Georgia. In February, Ukraine's Health Ministry said eight people had died of measles.

An expert WHO committee said four countries — Albania, the Czech Republic, Greece and the U.K. — have now lost their status as having eliminated measles.

Measles is preventable with two doses of the vaccine, but there is no effective treatment once people are infected.

In some developed countries, measles vaccination rates dropped sharply following the publication of a flawed study in the late 1990s that linked the combined measles, mumps and rubella vaccine to autism. Health officials have struggled to debunk misperceptions about the vaccine's safety ever since.

In 2017, the WHO estimated about 110,000 people died from measles worldwide, mostly children under 5 years old.

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## WORLD



RICK BOWMAN/AP

People protest at the financial district in Hong Kong on Wednesday against what they called sexual violence by police. Protests are ongoing as China deployed fresh military troops to Hong Kong.

## China rotates new troops into Hong Kong amid mass protests

Associated Press

HONG KONG — China's military deployed fresh troops to Hong Kong on Thursday in what it called a routine rotation amid speculation that it might intervene in the city's pro-democracy protests.

Video broadcast on China Central Television showed a long convoy of armored personnel carriers and trucks crossing the border at night and troops in formation disembarking from a ship. Earlier, scores of soldiers ran in unison onto trucks, which the state broadcaster said were bound for ports and entry points into Hong Kong. A handover ceremony was held before dawn.

"This time the task has a glorious mission. The responsibility is great. The job is difficult," an unnamed major said to troops before they departed. "The time for a true test has arrived."

The official Xinhua News Agency said it was the 22nd rotation of the People's Liberation Army's garrison in Hong Kong. The previous one was in August 2018.

Nearly three months of fiery anti-government demonstrations have sparked concerns that the military will be deployed in the semi-autonomous Chinese city. The Hong Kong garrison earlier published a promotional video with scenes of soldiers facing off with people dressed like

protesters.

Chinese Defense Ministry spokesman Ren Guoqiang told reporters in Beijing on Thursday that the demonstrators must abide by Hong Kong's laws.

A leader of 2014 pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong said the city's government is using the same tactics as five years ago.

"The government is just trying to threaten people with emergency law, with the entrance of the People's Liberation Army," Yvonne Leung said at a news conference.

The newly arrived Chinese troops have been educated on Hong Kong's laws and vowed to defend the nation's sovereignty, Xinhua said.

## Yemeni colonel: Airstrikes kill at least 30 troops

Associated Press

SANAA, Yemen — Airstrikes hit Yemeni government forces heading to the southern port city of Aden to fight separatists backed by the United Arab Emirates on Thursday, killing at least 30 troops, a government commander said.

It was not immediately clear who was behind the airstrikes but the government side blamed the UAE, which has armed and trained separatist militias in southern Yemen.

Officials in the UAE declined to immediately comment.

Infighting has raged for weeks between Yemeni government forces and the separatists, even though the two are allies in a Saudi-led coalition that has been fighting Yemen's Houthi rebels who control the capital, Sanaa, and most of the country's north since 2015. The UAE is also part of that coalition.

The fighting between forces loyal to the internationally recognized government and the separatists has added another layer to the complex civil war in the Arab world's most impoverished country.

Col. Mohamed al-Ohan, a commander of the special forces in Abyan province, said the troops were on the road, headed from Abyan toward Aden on Thursday, when the strikes took place. He didn't say who carried them out, saying only the planes were from

the Saudi-led coalition. The UAE also maintains warplanes as part of the coalition in Yemen.

Yemen's Foreign Ministry tweeted a statement by Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Abdullah al-Hadrami saying, "The government condemns the Emirati airstrike on government forces."

"We hold the UAE fully responsible for this explicit extra-judicial targeting" of the government forces, the statement said, adding that the airstrikes also left several civilians dead.

The government statement also urged the U.N. Security Council to condemn the airstrikes.

The attack came a day after government forces pushed into Aden to try and retake the city from UAE-backed separatists.

Earlier Wednesday, government troops wrestled back control of Zinjibar, the capital of neighboring Abyan province, from the separatists and headed toward Aden.

Information Minister Moammar al-Iryani said Wednesday that government forces also reclaimed Aden's airport, the main hub for the country's south, but the separatists denied that. According to officials speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the matter, forces loyal to Saudi-backed Yemeni President Mansour Abed Rabbo Hadi gained some ground at the Aden airport complex before the separatists forced them to retreat.

## Former Colombian negotiators say they are taking up arms again

Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia — A group of former peace negotiators for the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia announced they are taking up arms again following what they considered the failure of conservative President Ivan Duque to guarantee their political rights after the signing of a landmark peace deal.

In a video published before dawn Thursday, former chief rebel negotiator Luciano

Marin appeared alongside a group of some 20 heavily armed guerrillas condemning Duque and his supporters for standing by idly as hundreds of leftist activists and more than 150 former rebels have been killed since the 2016 peace deal, which sought to end a half-century of fighting.

"When we signed the accord in Havana we did so with the conviction that it was possible to change the life of the most humble and dispossessed," Marin, better known by his alias Ivan Marquez, said in

the more than 30-minute video. "But the state hasn't fulfilled its most important obligations, which is to guarantee the life of its citizens and especially avoid assassinations for political reasons."

In the video, Marin, speaking from what he said were Colombia's western jungles in the Amazon rain forest, stood alongside several former FARC leaders, including ideologue Seuxis Hernandez, alias Jesus Santrich, who abandoned the peace process after his arrest was sought by the U.S.

on drug charges.

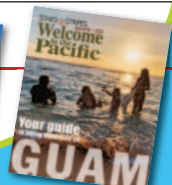
Rodrigo Londono, who had been the FARC's top military commander and now heads its political party known by the same acronym, distanced himself from his former comrades, with whom relations have been strained in the past year. In an interview with Blu Radio he apologized to his fellow Colombians and the international community, saying the vast majority of rebels remain committed to the peace process despite the rising security risks.

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# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Woman charged with kidnapping car dealer

**WA** SPOKANE — A judge set bond at \$20,000 for a woman accused of kidnapping a car dealer during a test drive in Spokane.

KXLY-TV reported Kasandra Ayala, 32, was arrested on charges of kidnapping, taking a motor vehicle without permission and assault.

Spokane police Sgt. Terry Preuninger said a Dave Smith Nissan employee called for help during the test drive after the woman refused to pull over or let him out.

## Lane change violation leads to drug charges

**NE** GILTNER — Court records said a North Carolina man was charged with possession of marijuana for sale after Nebraska troopers found hundreds of pounds of suspected marijuana in his vehicle.

Hamilton County Court records said David Shang, 27, of Raleigh, N.C., also is charged with lacking a tax stamp.

The Nebraska State Patrol said a trooper had pulled over Shang's pickup for an improper lane change. The patrol said a patrol K-9 alerted troopers to the presence of drugs, and about 270 pounds of pot was found in the truck bed along with more than 3,600 THC vape cartridges.

## Truck plunges off bridge, lands on busy freeway

**GA** MARIETTA — Police said a truck crushed about a bridge and landed on Interstate 75, killing its driver.

Cobb County police said the Chevrolet Silverado sped up a ramp over I-75. It then crashed through a concrete barrier and fell onto the freeway below, landing between the southbound and northbound lanes.

Video from Atlanta TV stations showed the truck crushed back on the pavement below with its rear wheels in the air.

Police said they identified the driver as Dennis Favre, 33, of Dallas, Ga.

## Sheriff: Wolf trail led to vandalism suspect

**NC** MARION — Sheriff's deputies in North Carolina said they traced a trail of blood to the house of a 68-year-old woman who's accused of vandalizing property, keying cars, breaking windows and trying to steal license plates.

The Charlotte Observer reported the McDowell County Sheriff's Office said that deputy Robert Watson responded to Crowder Cable's residence in western North Carolina twice on July 23. The first time, they found her intoxicated; the second time, she was bleeding.

Police said Watson traced a trail of blood from the scene of the vandalized cars to Cable's house next door.

Cable was charged with property damage, attempted larceny,



ROBERT F. BURATT/AP

## Rowing at sunrise

A quad scull of rowers begin their workout on Casco Bay as the sun starts to peek over Great Diamond Island in Portland, Maine, on Wednesday. Calm winds and flat water made for ideal conditions for the Portland Community Rowing Association's final outing of the year.

breaking and entering a motor vehicle, attempted breaking and entering and trespassing.

## Power saw used to break into clinic

**TX** SUGAR LAND — Police in suburban Houston are looking for a woman who used a power tool to break into a Botox clinic and steal anti-aging products.

Sugar Land police said surveillance cameras captured the burglary at the Botox RN MD Spa.

The footage shows a woman approaching the locked door of the spa and trying unsuccessfully to open it. She then retrieves a battery-powered grinding saw from a light-colored Mercedes SUV and uses it to cut into the clinic's front door.

Authorities said the woman stole an undisclosed amount of products from the clinic before driving away.

## Man hits police car with stolen ambulance

**TN** NASHVILLE — Authorities in Tennessee said a man stole an ambulance and led police on a car chase during which he crashed into a patrol car.

News outlets reported the man has been taken into custody.

## THE CENSUS

40

The approximate number of people involved in a brawl over a beach towel at a Northern California outdoor waterpark. Everest Robillard, chief of the Cal Expo Police Department, told the Sacramento Bee that police were called Sunday to Raging Waters in Sacramento to break up a fight between two families. He said the feud started over a beach towel then grew to insults and profanity, with one family upset that profanity was used in front of children. He said alcohol was involved.

Authorities didn't immediately release his identity or say what charges, if any, have been filed against him. Metro Nashville police said the ambulance was stolen from Vanderbilt University Medical Center and an officer attempted to pull it over.

Police said the driver stopped in the road and backed into the patrol car, causing its air bags to activate. The officer wasn't injured. Police said the ambulance driver then fled and crashed into an embankment and trees.

## Beer tent returns to Labor Day fest

**MI** BELDING — A popular Labor Day weekend festival in western Michigan is turning to beer to raise cash.

Organizers of the festival in Belding hope a beer tent will help pay bills and build a financial cushion for 2020. The event hasn't had a beer tent since the 1970s.

The beer tent will be open only

one night. Amber Rood, co-chair of the Belding Labor Day Committee, believes people might spill into area bars after last call.

## Island may ban shovels, large holes in sand

**SC** HILTON HEAD ISLAND — Leaders of a South Carolina island are one step closer to banning long shovels and large holes in the sand to protect sea turtles and beachgoers.

The Island Packet reported Hilton Head Island public planning committee members voted unanimously for the ordinance. The full council will vote on it Sept. 17.

The proposal would ban shovels longer than 14 inches. It would also ban holes larger than 12 inches deep and 12 inches wide.

A volunteer group called The Hilton Head Island Turtle Trackers says young turtles can get trapped in large holes after they hatch in dunes and head toward the sea.

## Snake Road closing to cars to let snakes cross

**IL** JONESBORO — Snake Road in southern Illinois is closing to cars so snakes can cross without getting run over.

The Southern Illinoisan reported that the road winding through the Shawnee National Forest will stay closed until late October.

It's not just snakes. Frogs, turtles, newts and salamanders are also starting to migrate across the road from swamps to limestone bluffs where they'll spend the winter.

Some are endangered, so the Forest Service goes the extra mile to ensure their safety.

## Derby winner charged with drunken driving

**IN** CORYDON — A jockey who won the Kentucky Derby three times faces a drunken-driving charge in southern Indiana.

WDRB.com reported that Calvin Borel was stopped in Harrison County. Online court records show he's charged with operating a vehicle while intoxicated and operating a vehicle while intoxicated endangering a person.

Borel, a Louisiana native, won the Kentucky Derby in 2007, 2009 and 2010. He also won the Preakness Stakes in 2009.

From wire reports

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## BUSINESS/WEATHER

# Facebook leaves loopholes in new ad rules

**By BARBARA ORTUTAY**  
*Associated Press*

SAN FRANCISCO — Facebook is tightening its rules around political advertising ahead of the 2020 U.S. presidential election, acknowledging previous misuse. But it's not clear if it will be enough to stop bad actors from abusing its system.

The changes include a tightened verification process that will require anyone wanting to run ads pertaining to elections, politics or big social issues like

guns and immigration to confirm their identity and prove they are in the U.S.

Beginning in mid-September, such advertisers confirm their group's identity using their organization's tax identification number or other government ID.

The verified group name will be listed on the "paid for by" disclaimers that disclose the backers of an ad, Facebook says it will verify this information against government records and will note in the disclaimer for confirmed ads that they're placed by a "con-

firmed organization."

That process won't apply to everyone, as Facebook says it would bar some smaller but legitimate groups from advertising. But a loophole that will allow small grassroots groups and local politicians to run political ads could also continue to allow bad actors to take advantage of the process.

Advertisers who don't have tax ID numbers, government websites or registrations with the Federal Election Commission will still be able to post ads by providing an address, verifiable phone

number, business email and website. Those advertisers won't get a "confirmed" designation. Previously, only a U.S. address was required. But it's not inconceivable that bad actors will find a way to spoof phone numbers and email addresses.

"We've acknowledged that these tools will not be perfect," Sarah Schiff, a Facebook product manager, said in an email. "But we are committed to making it more difficult for bad actors to misuse and abuse our platform" without penalizing smaller

organizations.

Schiff also reiterated the company's calls for regulation of online political advertising. Critics have said that Facebook's attempts at self-regulation are merely a way for the company to preempt stricter government crackdowns.

What the company has beefed up its fight against misinformation and coordinated attacks by malicious nation-states, the same can be said for those trying to game its systems.

# Apple apologizes, limits Siri eavesdropping

**By MICHAEL LIEDTKE**  
*Associated Press*

SAN FRANCISCO — Apple is apologizing for allowing outsiders to listen to snippets of people's recorded conversations with its digital assistant Siri, a practice that undermined its attempts to position itself as a trusted steward of privacy.

As part of the apology posted Wednesday, Apple reiterated an earlier pledge to stop keep-

ing audio recorded from Siri unless consumers give their permission.

When permission is granted, Apple said only its own employees will be allowed to review audio to help improve the service.

Previously, the company hired contractors to listen to some recordings.

"We realize we haven't been fully living up to our high ideals, and for that, we apologize," Apple said.

Apple would not say how it will seek permission.

In the past, the Cupertino, Calif., company has typically requested permissions through prompts during software update installations.

Apple intends to continue to rely upon computer-generated transcripts of what's being said to Siri as part of an effort to improve services, even if a user hasn't explicitly granted permission or opted in.

Unlike Facebook, Google and Amazon, which track what people are doing and where they are going to sell ads and merchandise, Apple has conspicuously emphasized that it has no interest in peering into its customers' lives.

CEO Tim Cook repeatedly has declared the company's belief that "privacy is a fundamental human right," a phrase that cropped up again in Apple's apology.

EUROPE GAS PRICES				
Country	Super E10	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Germany	\$2.840	\$3.231	\$3.485	\$3.249
Change in price	-2.4 cents	-1.7 cents	-2.1 cents	-1.1 cents
Netherlands	---	\$3.757	\$3.967	\$3.875
Change in price	---	+0.3 cents	+0.3 cents	+3.7 cents
U.K.	---	\$3.165	\$3.419	\$3.183
Change in price	---	-1.7 cents	-2.1 cents	-1.1 cents
Azores	---	---	\$3.406	---
Change in price	---	---	-2.1 cents	---
Belgium	---	\$2.878	\$2.991	\$3.107
Change in price	---	No change	No change	No change
Turkey	---	---	\$3.302	\$3.102*
Change in price	---	---	-2.1 cents	+2.5 cents

PACIFIC GAS PRICES				
Country	Unleaded	Super unleaded	Super plus	Diesel
Japan	---	\$3.269	---	\$3.039
Change in price	---	-2.0 cents	---	-1.0 cents
Okinawa	\$2.629	---	---	\$3.039
Change in price	-2.0 cents	---	---	-1.0 cents
South Korea	\$2.659	---	\$3.299	\$3.069
Change in price	-2.0 cents	---	-1.0 cents	-1.0 cents
Guam	\$2.639**	\$3.029	\$3.279	---
Change in price	-2.0 cents	-2.0 cents	-2.0 cents	---

\* Diesel EFD \*\* Midgrade  
For the week of Aug. 30-Sept. 5

MARKET WATCH		Aug. 28, 2019
Dow Jones Industrials	258.20	26,036.10
Nasdaq composite	29.94	7,856.88
Standard & Poor's 500	18.78	2,887.94
Russell 2000	16.67	1,472.71

EXCHANGE RATES	
Military rates	
Euro costs (Aug. 30)	\$1.1362
Dollar buys (Aug. 30)	€0.8801
British pound (Aug. 30)	\$1.25
Japanese yen (Aug. 30)	103.00
South Korean won (Aug. 30)	1,184.00
Commercial rates	
Bahrain (Dhs)	0.3770
British pound	\$1.2196
Canada (Dollar)	1.3297
China (Yuan)	7.1449
Denmark (Krone)	6.7390
Egypt (Pound)	16.5493
Euro	\$1.1064/0.9038
Hong Kong (Dollar)	7.8464
Hungary (Forint)	299.38
Israel (Shekel)	3.5287
Japan (Yen)	106.43
Kuwait (Dinar)	6.3040
Norway (Krone)	0.9806
Philippines (Peso)	52.21
Poland (Zloty)	3.97
Saudi Arabia (Riyal)	3.7483
Singapore (Dollar)	1.3880
South Korea (Won)	1,209.65
Switzerland (Franc)	0.9836
Thailand (Baht)	36.52
Turkey (Lira)	0.8320
Military exchange rates are those available to customers at military banking facilities in the country of issuance for Japan, South Korea, Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. For nonlocal currency exchange rates (i.e., purchasing British pounds in Germany), check with your local military banking facility. Commercial rates are interbank rates provided for reference when buying currency. All figures are foreign currencies to one dollar, except for the British pound, which is represented in dollars-to-pound, and the euro, which is dollars-to-euro.)	
INTEREST RATES	
Prime rate	5.25
Discount rate	2.75
Federals funds market rate	1.12
3-month bill	1.95
30-year bond	1.94

## WEATHER OUTLOOK



The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.

WEEKEND



A wish list for  
'Black Panther 2'  
Movies, Page 23



# ALL GROWN UP

Taylor Swift's impressive new album, 'Lover,' is her 1st to feel like it's solely aimed at adults

Music, Page 36

## WEEKEND: GADGETS



Ario Kon/Bloomberg

An employee (left) assists customers July 17 with a Sourcnext Corp. Pocketaalk portable translation device at a store in Tokyo. Unlike smartphones, Pocketaalk is designed solely for translation.

## A deeper understanding

## Tourists in Japan fueling a boom in translation devices

By KANTARO KOMIYA  
Bloomberg

**T**akehiko Fujita wouldn't be able to do his job selling eye drops and pain relievers without his pocket translator.

Instead of an app, language dictionary, or call-in translation service, the clerk in a Japanese drugstore uses Pocketaalk, a \$25,000 yen (\$230) device made by Sourcnext Corp. that looks like an oval plug. The gadget translates phrases to and from 74 languages, helping Fujita communicate with customers from Sweden, Vietnam and other countries.

Tourists are flooding into Japan, with 31 million people visiting the archipelago in 2018, triple the number six years earlier, according to the Japan National Tourism Organization. Businesses are struggling with visitors looking to shop, eat and move around — a situation that will probably worsen during next year's Tokyo Olympics. Seeking to tap into demand, electronics maker Fujitsu Ltd. and office supplier King Jim Co. are challenging Pocketaalk's 94% market share with their own products.

"I'm not worried anymore," said Fujita, who works at a Takeya store in Tokyo's Okachimachi area. He used to rely on Google Translate to talk to customers, but now he picks up the Pocketaalk dangling from his neck to chat with people. "I can speak to people who, at first glance, come from foreign countries and might not understand me."

While smartphone apps remain a popular — and common — translation tool, Pocketaalk has carved out its own niche. Dedicated for just one purpose, the gadget has a sensitive microphone, and accesses machine translation and voice-recognition software from Google, Baidu and others, improving accuracy. More than 500,000 Pocketaalk units have been sold since it debuted in 2017. Formerly a developer of greeting card design software, Sourcnext collaborated with Dutch startup Travis, which had already developed a translation prototype, to create Pocketaalk. Additionally, Sourcnext used expertise from Rosetta Stone Inc.'s Japan unit, which it bought in April 2017.

Sourcnext is also targeting outgoing Japanese tourists. Japan remains a relatively monolingual country, ranking 49th among 88 countries and regions in terms of English proficiency. A new

Pocketaalk model features a built-in global SIM card that's active for two years in more than 100 countries, which lets the device access data to process translations.

"With this tool, tourists are able to do things they couldn't before," said Hajime Kawatake, senior software designer at Sourcnext. There's now growing interest from businesses in Japan that deal with foreigners, he said, adding that Sourcnext has received inquiries from more than 4,000 companies.

Pocketaalk's success has helped to fuel a boom in Sourcnext's shares. The stock has more than doubled since the device debuted in 2017. Revenue climbed 55% to 14.7 billion yen in the latest fiscal year that ended in March. Operating profit fell 31% to 860 million yen, however, as the company spent aggressively on marketing and advertising to defend market share.

Fujitsu has been marketing its own translator, called Arrows Hello. The 30,000 yen product, on sale since May and similar in shape to the Pocketaalk, is different because it has a camera that also translates text. Demand is particularly high among retailers as well as the transportation sector including taxi companies, according to Hiroshi Tamura, general sales manager at Fujitsu Connected Technologies.

The market for language translators may be larger "than what we expect," Tamura said.

King Jim, which sells office stationery and supplies, released a desktop translator for stores on July 19. Called World Speak and priced at 148,000 yen, the device has two displays, one for the customer and another for store clerks. Shoppers can select their national flag on a screen to start translating in their native language.

"Seeing so many foreign tourists and residents these days, we're seeking to break the language barrier with our product," said Masatoshi Takao, King Jim's assistant research and development manager. Phrases are translated and delivered as audio, as well as on World Speak's panel. Hotels, shopping complexes, hospitals and pharmacies have expressed interest in World Speak, which handles 72 languages, he said.

"Now that Japan is a tourist destination, there's no excuse for businesses to say 'We don't understand foreigners,'" said Eiji Mori, chief analyst at market researcher BCN. "They need to grow revenue, so translators will keep growing."

## GADGET WATCH

## Wakey alarm clock also charges phone

By GREGG ELLMAN  
Tribune News Service

**A**nker's Soundcore Wakey is a perfect all-in-one bedside companion with an attractive Apple-like look.

The nightstand speaker/alarm clock has a built-in Qi charging system, which worked perfectly with my iPhone XS. The cable-free charging is done with a top-side pad, so all you do is place your Qi-compatible device on it for charging.

Anker's website rates it as a 7.5W charge for iPhones XR, XS Max, XS, X, and 8 Plus and 10W for Samsung S10, S10+, S9, S9+, S8, S8+ and Note 9.

Right behind the front-sided, light gray-colored cloth grill is an LED readout that displays the time; it has five brightness levels. Setting the time is easy; just connect your phone to the Soundcore app and the Wakey syncs the time. A backup battery stores the time in the event of loss of power.

The Wakey gives you 10 custom alarm tone options, and you can set your own in the app. Bluetooth is built-in and there's also a pair of USB ports for plugging in charging cables for non-wireless charging devices.

It's packed with other features including an FM radio and room for 10 FM preset stations, white noise mode for a better sleeping environment and an Aux-in port for connecting a separate device. And yes, there is the ever-popular and critically important snooze button.

The sound comes from dual front-facing SW drivers, which deliver the music at moderate volume levels in a clear, crisp sound.

The Wakey can also be used to help you fall asleep; the app allows you to create a sleep-themed mix up of 10 ambient noises and will play them as long as you want. The preloaded white noise mode has choices of birds, rain, waves, and other relaxing sounds.

One feature the Wakey doesn't have, which I'm thrilled with, is a connection to a voice assistant. Voice assistants are great for many things, but keeping them out of bedside alarm clocks is a bad great thing.

A DC power supply is included. Online: anker.com; \$99.99, available in white

**Airway has launched the Glow C air quality monitor, which also functions as a smart plug.**

It plugs into a standard electrical outlet and also has a pass-through outlet; it tracks chemicals, humidity and temperature and how they change over time.

According to a press release from Airway, "Poor air quality conditions can affect the body in a variety of ways. Exposure to high levels of chemicals such as



ANKER/TNS

The Soundcore Wakey nightstand speaker/alarm clock also has cable-free charging.



AIRWAY/TNS

The Glow C air quality monitor tracks chemicals, humidity and temperature.

volatile organic compounds has been known to cause respiratory and skin irritation and allergy-like symptoms. Abnormal humidity levels can cause dehydration and chronic skin and throat irritation, and can lead to dermatitis and eczema flare-ups. Studies have also shown that significant changes in temperature can decrease productivity, impair cognitive function and aggravate asthma."

With the smart plug feature, non-smart devices can be connected to the Glow C, such as a humidifier or air purifier, which will turn on in reaction to the indoor air quality.

The Airway companion app controls the settings, which include telling it to turn on a fan plugged into the Glow C if the room temperature is too high. Other customizable settings in the app can be triggered based on the air quality criteria and what you want it to be. The app offers tips on how to improve the air quality with the supplied readings.

The Glow C also features an LED light color, hue and motion settings to transform the device into a customized smart nightlight with hundreds of color options. Glow C is also compatible with Amazon Alexa, Google Home, Next and IFTTT.

Online: getawayair.com; \$79



## WEEKEND: MOVIES

## COMMENTARY

5 things we want to see in

'BP2'



Marvel Studios photos

Chadwick Boseman is pictured as Black Panther/T'Challa in a scene from "Avengers: Infinity War." The sequel to the hugely successful "Black Panther" won't reach theaters until 2022, but it's never too early to speculate about developments on Wakanda.

By DAVID BETANCOURT  
The Washington Post

One of the biggest announcements at Disney's D23 Expo last weekend was the date of the Black Panther's return to the big screen. Don't expect to be shouting "Wakanda forever" at a theater near you anytime soon: "Black Panther" director Ryan Coogler appeared onstage alongside Marvel Studios mastermind Kevin Feige to announce that the release is three years away: May 6, 2022.

Feige told the crowd that Coogler has turned in a treatment for "BP2" and that they already have a title, but the two weren't ready to reveal any hints just yet.

Following up on the 2018 original's \$1.3 billion worldwide and three Academy Awards (after seven nominations) is no simple task, which is why Coogler wanted to let fans know they're taking their time trying to get things right.

So begins the speculation of what a "Black Panther" sequel can do to top the first. We can at least say we're pretty sure Spider-Man won't be showing up in Wakanda. Although how cool would that have been?

Here are five things we hope to see:

### 1. Namor the Sub-Mariner

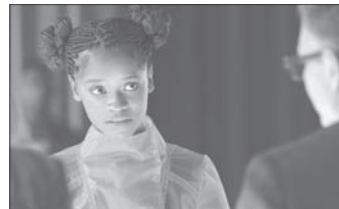
Namor has an intense rivalry with the Black Panther in the pages of Marvel Comics, and fans have been buzzing that he could be the main adversary in "Black Panther II." That buzz began during "Avengers: Endgame" when Okoye (Danai Gurira) reported that Wakanda was monitoring earthquakes under the oceans. Why bring up the ocean (where Namor rules the seas as Atlantean royalty) if it wasn't meant to be explored in a future Black Panther film?

Namor is a classic Marvel character who debuted in 1939, two years before Aquaman did at DC Comics. If he is to be Coogler's next Killmonger, Marvel Studios will have to power through the red tape of some dated contracts at Universal, which has Namor's movie rights. Marvel Studios probably wouldn't want Namor in his own movie franchise, given that Warner Bros. and DC Entertainment just made \$1.1 billion worldwide with "Aquaman." But we could see a situation where the character appears throughout future Marvel Studios movies, as has the Incredible Hulk, another character the company doesn't fully own. A cinematic battle with the Black Panther would be a great start.



### 2. Killmonger in the Wakandan ancestral plane

Michael B. Jordan's Killmonger, an easy contender for greatest Marvel Studios villain ever, died in a Wakandan battle at the end of "Black Panther," but that doesn't mean we won't see him again. Some of "Black Panther's" most emotional scenes involved the ancestral plane, a spiritual locale where the Black Panther can summon the guidance of loved ones who have died. The film showed both T'Challa and Killmonger visiting their dead fathers this way. If the Black Panther seeks spiritual guidance in the ancestral plane again, could Killmonger be there on the other side awaiting him? Then again, Killmonger told the Black Panther to bury him in the ocean, and if you need a reminder of who is in the ocean, go back to No. 1 on this list. Atlantean technology can do some crazy things.



### 3. Shuri as the Black Panther

Shuri (Letitia Wright), the genius younger sister of the Black Panther, is one of the Marvel universe's greatest minds, and in the Black Panther comics she is the person who can step into the mantle of the Black Panther should anything happen to her older brother T'Challa. It would be a waste to introduce Shuri to the Marvel Cinematic Universe and not give her this big moment. Especially if, say, T'Challa is temporarily unable to be the Black Panther because of injuries he has suffered in battle with, say, Namor (yes, we are really pushing this rivalry).

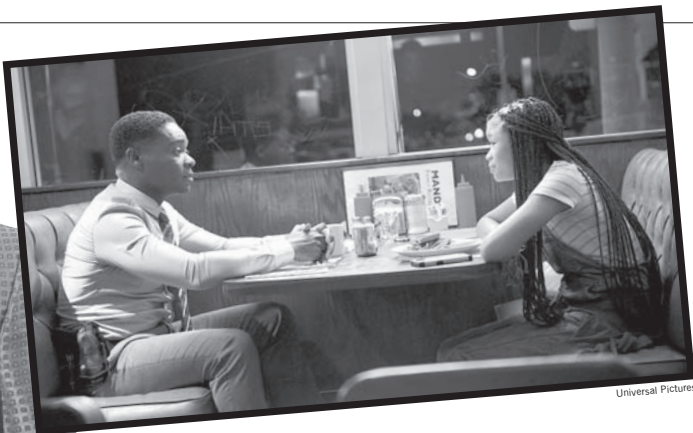
### 4. The cape

When writer Reggie Hudlin and artist John Romita Jr. were beginning their run on Marvel's Black Panther comics back in 2005, Romita had a very important cape question for Hudlin: Did he want a long cape or a short cape? Regardless, there was going to be a cape. Many Black Panther fans consider the cape look to be his best look, but that's not a style that translated to the big screen. Maybe, if even for just a ceremonial event, we can see the cape flapping in "Black Panther II."

### 5. The soundtrack

If you think the soundtrack to "Black Panther II" will be anything less than a banger after the fire that was dropped in 2018, you clearly weren't listening. The only question is whether Kendrick Lamar will return as an artist and producer or whether a new musician will take over. Expect much hotness.

## WEEKEND: MOVIES



# Beyond the call

David Oyelowo discusses his new time-travel thriller 'Don't Let Go,' being a dad, what keeps him grounded

By JOSEPH V. AMODIO  
Newsday

**D**avid Oyelowo's new thriller "Don't Let Go" delivers plot twists, turns and one unusual distinction — it may actually have audiences hoping and praying that a teenager WON'T hang up her phone. We're talking an alternate reality, clearly.

Writer-director Jacob Estes' film, which hits theaters Friday, tracks a Los Angeles police detective (Oyelowo) who is shocked to receive a cellphone call from his beloved — and recently murdered — niece (Storm Reid). The teen, you see, is somehow calling from the past (just imagine the roaming charges) and the two must work together to solve the crime and prevent it from ever happening.

Born in England to Nigerian parents, Oyelowo garnered acclaim as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in "Selma" (2014). He also co-starred as Javert in the BBC miniseries "Les Misérables," which will be seen on PBS this spring. Fans can catch him in the upcoming "Come Away" with Angelina Jolie and "The Water Man," his directorial debut.

The actor, 43, spoke recently by phone with Newsday.

**Newsday: As I watched "Don't Let Go," I couldn't help but think of "Memento," "Sliding Doors," even "Groundhog Day." All films with quirky takes on time.**

**Oyelowo:** Those films were definitely inspirations. But the thing I love about "Don't Let Go" is the way ... it's steeped in a kind of unconventional love story — a familial love story between this uncle and his niece.

**It's true, we don't often see that relationship on screen.**

I'm always looking for material that has something to say. I enjoy a piece of fluffy entertainment as much as the next person, but sometimes with genre films like this it's all popcorn and no meat.

**Being able to go back in time — or at least phone there — begs the question: If you could go back in time and get a do-over, where would you go?**

Well, in secondary school — I guess we call it high school here — there were some fashion choices I'd definitely like to go back and rectify, umm, for sure. (He laughs.) No, the thing that really struck me making the film ... I lost my mom two years ago.

**Oh, I'm sorry.**

Thank you. It was the first time I'd lost someone that close to me. And you do find yourself thinking, "Gosh, if I had the time again, what would I say? What would I do differently?" My mom and I had a wonderful relationship and not too much was left unsaid, but it definitely made me be able to relate to this idea that if I could do anything to bring back a loved one, I'd do it. By and large, I am a believer that things happen for a reason, and going back to try to change things is kind of futile and probably not what we're designed to do. I think we should leave the past alone. But, and this is the contradiction for me, as a father, if I could do anything to prevent anything detrimental [from] happening to my children, I would do it. I'd totally be trying to reach back through time.

**So the fact that you're a dad with four kids, it sounds like that had an impact on why you took this role.**

It was a huge factor. This emotional drive through the script of save her, save her, save her, save her — that was the thing that really gripped me. I'm also always looking for roles that are a challenge and defy expectation. And I'm known for more historical roles ... period dramas. So the action elements, the thriller elements, the time travel — these were all new for me.

**What's it been like for you and your wife as Brits transplanted to Los Angeles?**

We moved here in 2007. My four children were born here. We've since become American citizens. This town and this country and this industry have been incredibly good to me.

**Some people see L.A. and Hollywood as this godless, immoral place. But you're a fairly religious man and clearly find a way to make it work.**

Yeah ... that was very much my dad's attitude about the entertainment industry — period. I might not have gone into acting if I was one of those teenagers who listened to ... his parents. (He chuckles.) Which clearly I'm not. I've lived in Lagos, London, New York, L.A. What helps is that I'm here with my wife, my four kids, my three dogs, my dad, and we have a sort of inbuilt community that offsets all the craziness. I'm not running about town schmoozing the whole time. By and large, you'll find me at home, on a film set, or at church. (He chuckles again.) So that definitely helps with keeping your nose clean.

David Oyelowo and Storm Reid star in the supernatural thriller "Don't Let Go," in theaters Friday.

WALLY SHAW/Los Angeles Times

## WEEKEND: MOVIES

## ‘Don’t Let Go’ works on emotions, not intellect

By MICHAEL O’SULLIVAN

The Washington Post

Letting go of the past and moving on is healthy, but hard. “God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,” the old prayer goes, “the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Our very human desire for do-overs has fueled the fantasy underlying countless time-travel movies, including variants like the 2000 film “Frequency” and the 2016 CW series inspired by it. (They’re not time-travel stories, per se, but they involve people in the present who can communicate with dead people in the past, sticking their fingers where they don’t belong: in the flowing waters of the time-space continuum.)

“Don’t Let Go” is pretty much exactly that scenario, replacing the magic shortwave radio of “Frequency” with a magic mobile phone. Talk about your do-overs: As with those earlier entertainments, a character in the new movie suddenly finds himself able to connect with a loved one whose death may be preventable. At least with “Frequency,” the glitch was attributed to the aurora borealis; here, it seems to be some kind of unlimited family data plan that your cellular carrier does not offer.

As original as the premise might be, the movie works well enough, thanks mainly to its two



Universal Pictures

A detective’s (David Oyelowo) recently murdered niece (Storm Reid) calls him in an attempt to prevent her death in “Don’t Let Go.”

stars: David Oyelowo, portraying an LAPD detective named Jack, and Storm Reid as his teenage niece Ashley, who was murdered two weeks earlier. Their connection and chemistry—which play out over the course of the film in cellphone conversations wherein Jack tries to prevent her death—is critical to the success of the far-fetched story, as it always

is with such things. Sure, it’s a sci-fi-tinged mystery thriller, but it’s also, at heart, a tale of two people. If we don’t care about them, the whole thing falls apart.

Fortunately, we do. Reid “A Wrinkle in Time” and Oyelowo “Selma”) are immensely likable performers, and their on-screen rapport is palpable, even though they are hardly ever in the same

place together, let alone the same time, save for a handful of scenes.

One early scene sets up the nature of their bond: Ashley’s father, played by Brian Tyree Henry, has bipolar disorder and is a not-quite-reformed drug dealer, so she’s looking for a more reliable father figure. Midway through the film, a shot of

Jack and Ashley sharing a diner booth together — as the dead girl talks to her distraught uncle — is a metaphor, not meant to be taken literally. In another scene, a pre-murder Ashley hangs up the phone with future-Jack, only to chew out past-Jack, who has a look of confusion on his face that may mirror the one on yours.

“Don’t Let Go” manages, at times, to generate a nicely weird “Twilight Zone” vibe, but fails to sustain it, as it also runs into some of the same problems that plague movies of this ilk: If you tear the fabric of time by altering what has already happened, it can be difficult to sew it back up straight. This makes for a narrative that is occasionally muddy and ambiguous, as Jack issues instructions to Ashley with the benefit of hindsight that isn’t quite 20/20. He knows what happened, in other words, but he can’t predict what will happen when he undoes it.

This leads to circumstances that put him — and Ashley — in sometimes violent jeopardy, as he tries to simultaneously save the girl, by selectively plucking out threads of the past, and unravel the whodunit. His efforts make for a watchable movie, if one that’s less than deeply satisfying, not to mention observant of the laws of logic.

Emotionally, “Don’t Let Go” works like magic. Intellectually, not so much.

“Don’t Let Go” is rated R for violence, bloody images and strong language. Running time: 103 minutes.

## ‘The Farewell’ is gentle and quiet, but also funny

By LINDSEY BAHR

Associated Press

The premise behind writer and director Lulu Wang’s wonderful film “The Farewell” might be a little hard to accept for some audiences. A family collectively decides not to tell their grandmother that she has been diagnosed with lung cancer and has only three months to live. But wanting a chance to say goodbye, they arrange an elaborate ruse — a wedding — to get everyone together one last time.

Far-fetched? For Americans it is. But as we learn in the first frame, the film is “Based on an actual lie.”

Yes, Wang has mined her own family’s wild true story to create a film that, despite its hyper-specific premise and setting, is a universally relatable and heart-rending portrait of how looming death affects a family. It’s not emotionally manipulative or even necessarily a tear-jerker, although it’s not a bad idea to bring along tissues. “The Farewell” is a stoic and honest representation of a flawed and lovely family coming to terms with the inevitable.

Awkwafina plays the stand-in for Wang. Her character, Billi, is a 31-year-old New Yorker whose financial and career instability is starting to become more than just a temporary state of youth. She’s having trouble paying the rent, her parents are reaching the point where they don’t really want to live anymore, and she’s just been rejected for a fellowship she was counting



A24

Billi (Awkwafina, center) reunites with her family in China when her grandmother receives a grim cancer diagnosis in “The Farewell.”

on. She’s rudderless and drifting.

Then her parents inform her that her beloved grandmother Nai Nai (Shuzhen Zhao, who will win your heart in an instant) is dying in China. They’re not going to tell Nai Nai, and instead are going to China under the pretense of her cousin getting married, even though he’s only been dating his girlfriend for a few months.

Billi, who has been raised in the United States since she was 6, is appalled they’d

even think of keeping the diagnosis from Nai Nai. Her mother Jian (Diana Lin) flatly explains, “There’s a saying in China: When you get cancer, you die.” Part of what kills you, she believes, is the fear. Later, someone asks what the point would be in ruining Nai Nai’s good mood with the truth. You might even find yourself buying into the idea at points. Maybe this is a more empathetic way.

And so a plane ride later, everyone is together at Nai Nai’s, cooking, eating,

quarreling and planning this very real fake wedding. Her sons both left China and have lived most of their adult lives elsewhere — Haiyan (Tzi Ma), Billi’s father, in America, and the other in Japan. This family reunion is a long time coming. They haven’t all been together in 25 years, and it’s as comforting, fraught and melancholy as a reunion should be.

Awkwafina, who made a name for herself with larger-than-life comedic performances, is quiet, understated and heartbreaking as Billi, who is grappling with the idea of impermanence while her own life stands still. She has maintained a sweet and close relationship with Nai Nai despite their physical distance. She’s also the most outwardly sentimental of the bunch, so much so that her parents don’t even want her to come to China to say goodbye.

The film is a heady, gentle and emotional journey, but Wang also packs the frame with layered conversation and funny background action. She makes the family dynamics feel universally familiar while also presenting an intimate portrait of China and Chinese families.

This is Wang’s second feature. Her first, “Posthumous,” was never released theatrically. But that fate is unlikely to befall her again after such an assured statement as “The Farewell.” She is a superb writer and director, and a name worth knowing.

“The Farewell” is rated PG for thematic material, brief language and some smoking. Running time: 98 minutes.



## WEEKEND: VIDEO GAMES

# Nintendo at its most flirtatious

## Fire Emblem: Three Houses explores romance in a sword-and-sorcery setting

By TODD MARTENS  
Los Angeles Times

**T**he drama comes quickly in Fire Emblem: Three Houses, the latest in Nintendo's wonderfully weird, soap opera-worthy sword-and-sorcery fairy tale franchise.

A teacher introduces her medical practice by also noting that she's single and ready to mingle. A student lays the groundwork for doubting that you're truly your father's daughter. An academic administrator says, "We try to avoid discrimination based on social status," but, well, you know how the upper class can be, so get used to it.

And then there's the professor who can't borrow a book without returning it full of crumbs and grease stains.

Who has time for what may or may not be an oppressive religion, a tenuous peace agreement that threatens to send an empire into a war and a ghost-like creature who randomly appears to rewind time, a female specter who is keeping you alive even though she introduces herself by essentially saying she isn't sure why she's even bothering?

No wonder one of the first characters you encounter offers this warning: "Is your calendar clear? This will take awhile."

Part "Game of Thrones" and part Harry Potter, with way more comically disastrous rom-com elements than either of them, Fire Emblem: Three Houses can be a lot to manage. But it's the best sort of overwhelming — a romance that's also a high school drama that's also an incredibly complex fantasy strategy game that also provides a shy dose of political commentary.

There's no shortage, for instance, of members of the establishment who seem to like the way things are, which gives the game an underlying generational tension that mirrors our own political discourse. But regardless of age, the most likable characters in Fire Emblem: Three Houses are those with the idealistic belief that things can get better, repeatedly reminding us that the old way of doing things isn't necessarily the best way.

"Just because someone is special doesn't mean their children are special too," says one student. That's for sure. Fire Emblem: Three Houses throws a major decision at players in its opening moments, asking the player to become a professor to one of three factions in a sort of warrior-magic boarding school for the chosen few. It's not a series for the indecisive, unless you're ready to replay it trying multiple choices and paths.

The similarities to the Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry from the Potter series is impossible to miss, and it's easy to spend more time in the first half of the game wandering the school — fishing, tending to horses, dining with students, playing matchmaker, offering lectures — than it is doing battle.

It's not idle busywork, though. These conversations allow the player to recruit students from neighboring houses and learn who is an upper-crust, institutional brat and who truly wants to make a difference in the world.

With a core story that could take 80 hours or more and then two alternate paths that could add 160 hours, one wants to be a completist, Fire Emblem: Three Houses is probably best devoured over the course of a few months, if not an entire year.

Having played about 30 hours of Three Houses since its release July 26, I've resigned that, even when I "finish" it, I'll have seen just a fraction of the characters, plot and romances. What continues to bring me back to the game is that, however, are the ways in which this genre mashup probably shouldn't work.

While the writing tends to be corny and characters are often drawn in broad strokes, Fire Emblem: Three Houses still manages to develop into a rather thoughtful simulation of personality management and how we interact with one another — how people are shaped not just by their own



**Fire Emblem: Three Houses is a genre mashup designed to last well over 100 hours. It's a commitment of time and, in its many searches for love, of the heart. Is it worth getting attached?**



experiences but by those we surround ourselves with, sometimes by choice and sometimes by fate. And maybe we shouldn't be so quick to trust or fall in love. A challenge, perhaps, as Three Houses is more overtly amorous from its opening chapters than recent Fire Emblem games.

The game requires one to manage friendships and romance as much as battleships — we are better at our jobs if we form allegiances — and yet most everyone in the game is flawed in some way. I tend to be rather picky when it comes to picking a mate for my character. One can create a male or female avatar at the start and change the name from the given Byleth. While there are options for same-sex partnerships, know that pretty much everyone will flirt with everyone in the world of Fire Emblem, but their selfish interests don't always align with yours.

This can be frustrating when one spends time to court another, but those who buy in to the game's worldview may also find there are lessons to be learned here.

My creation, Kes, for instance, seems to have her eye on a music-loving magic user. The latter's penchant for faith is a slight turnoff, but most of the characters, male or female, tend to be a little too flirtatiously aggressive, which is an even larger turnoff.

I avoided choosing the school with the well-known "skirt chaser" not to deal with his egotistical, over-confident masculinity — on

my first day on the job he asked me to set him up — and then I proceeded to be disappointed that other characters in the game seem drawn to him. Meanwhile, I've spent plenty of time trying to get to know people who seem more interested in talking to animals or aren't interested in leaving their dormitories, as I'm suspicious of anyone, in virtual and real worlds, who isn't somewhat aloof.

But when playing successful matchmaker to others, I wonder if I'm doing my own character a disservice. When I overhear someone say they love "broody boys," I wonder if they truly know what's best for them. More times than not the answer is no, and Three Houses shows us the ways in which people can be mixed and matched to potentially become better than the sum of their parts, often in unexpected ways.

And yet I haven't talked about how battles can unfold like chess matches and stretch for 40 minutes or more, especially if you refuse, as I do, to let any team members die. There are weapons to buy, warriors to train and just when someone is becoming formidable with a sword, they tell you they want to ride a horse and use a lance instead, as if the entire oncoming war has time to wait for them to learn a whole new skill because they don't think you're that good of a teacher.

Maybe Kes is just going to go it alone.

Platform: Nintendo Switch

Online: fireemblem.nintendo.com

## WEEKEND: QUICK TRIPS

## Europe



Katie Ferguson

The Wildlife Park at the Domain of the Caves of Han occupies more than 600 acres.

# A walk on the wild side

Belgian attraction offers spectacular caves and a one-of-a-kind animal park

PHOTOS BY BRIAN FERGUSON/Stars and Stripes

Visitors descend into the cave at the Domain of the Caves of Han, in Han-sur-Lesse, Belgium, on Aug. 17.

BY BRIAN FERGUSON  
Stars and Stripes

If you want to see animals, navigate a cave, hike, ride a train and sleep in the woods all in one day, the Domaine des Grottes de Han (Domain of the Caves of Han) should be on your short list.

The park is in Han-sur-Lesse in Belgium, about a 2½-hour drive east of Kaiserslautern, Germany. It is open seven days a week during the peak season. When you arrive in the town of Han, parking is plentiful but will cost you six euros unless you are lucky enough to find a spot in the city center.

We arrived at 10:30 a.m., and the lines were short. We purchased a PassHan, which gives you access to the cave, the nature park and the museum. We were told to visit the park first, as the animals are more active in the morning.

The start of your adventure is in the city center. Trams and trains are used to ferry passengers to the nature park and cave. Both run every 30 minutes and provide ample seating. There is also a hiking path for those who want to walk around the massive park, which takes about three hours.

We choose to ride the safari bus for the wildlife park, as the 3-mile walk was not something we wanted to do with our young children.

The 617-acre Wildlife Park is the only one in Belgium that has the European "Big 5": the wolf, the bear, the lynx, the European bison and the wolverine. The bus stops at each site so visitors can get a good view. The ride lasts about 90 minutes.

The impressive brown bear enclosure gives visitors an up-close look. There also is a food pavilion offering delicious Belgian waffles and beer.

The bus takes you back to the city center, where you catch a century-old train to the caves. The trip through the cave is done on foot and is about 1 mile long. The tour takes about two hours.

There wasn't an English tour offered, so we went on the Netherlands tour. Luckily our guide spoke English and translated his presentation as we walked through. Speaking from experience, make sure you and your children use the restroom before you enter the caves, as there are no facilities inside.

The cave is impressive, and the chambers get larger as you stroll through. During the summer, the Lesse river recedes, opening the cave for visitors. In the winter, the caves are filled with water.

More than 500,000 years ago, the Lesse forced its way into the limestone mountains. This contributed to the formation of an extraordinary network of underground caves, according to the Domaine des Grottes de Han website.

As you get closer to the end of the tour, visitors are treated to a sound and light show in the Weapons Room, the second-largest chamber in the cave. The 15-minute show, entitled "Origin," brings the cave to life, with a colorful display of its history.

Exiting the cave takes you back to the city center, or the playground, whichever you prefer.

Visitors to the park can also go spelunking in an older part of the cave system, with boots, helmets and overalls provided. Children must be at least 6 years old to visit, and all children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult.

For overnight stays, you can book a treehouse inside the nature park. From platforms suspended between trees, you can enjoy your very own private nature show. This option is highly sought after, so plan your stay early.

The Domain of the Caves of Han is amazing, and the kids loved it. It is worth a visit.

Some advice: Buy tickets online, where they are 2 euros cheaper; get there early so you aren't rushed; and bring a camera.

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## TIMES

Opening and closing hours vary according to day of the week and season.

## COSTS

Tickets online are 29 euros for adults, 20 euros for kids 4-11. Add 2 euros per ticket when purchasing on site. Annual tickets are available.



## ON THE QT

### DIRECTIONS

Address: Rue Joseph Lamotte 2, 5580 Rochefort, Belgium

Google Maps will take you to the front door. Easily accessible via major highways through Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium.

Follow signs for parking once you arrive in town.



## FOOD

There are plenty of food pavilions throughout the park serving drinks, snacks and waffles. If you're seeking a meal, there are restaurants in the city.

## INFORMATION

Almost everyone who works at the park speaks English. However, the tours are not given in English. Official website: grotte-de-han.be/en

— Brian Ferguson



## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe

## Europe's top university sights worth studying

When touring any city, it's fun to drop in on the local university. But in Europe, universities can be essential sightseeing, as some are home to great architectural, artistic and cultural treasures.

In medieval Europe, higher education was the domain of the Church and was limited to ecclesiastical schools. Scholars lived in a community of monastic-type residential "halls," with lecture halls and often elaborate chapels in easy reach. This is especially true in Great Britain, still deservedly known for its prestigious universities. While several are worth touring, from a sightseeing point of view, I most enjoy Cambridge, near London. Two of Cambridge's highlights are the King's College Chapel and Wren Library.

The 500-year-old King's College Chapel is the best surviving example of English late Gothic architecture. It boasts the largest single span of vaulted roof anywhere — 2,000 tons of glorious fan vaulting — and the most complete collection of original 16th-century Renaissance stained glass in existence.

The Wren Library, at Cambridge's Trinity College, features the light and airy design of Sir Christopher Wren, the architect famous for designing St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Unlike other libraries at Cambridge, this one is on an upper floor, allowing it to be flooded with light. Its 12 display cases contain a rotating collection of items, such as early editions of Shakespeare plays, handwritten works by John Milton, Sir Isaac Newton's notebook and poem, and A.A. Milne's original Winnie the Pooh.

Another treasured library is the elegant King Joao's Library (Biblioteca Joanina),

at the University of Coimbra, in central Portugal. This 300-year-old temple of thought showcases 40,000 books in impressive Baroque splendor. The interior is all wood, including reading tables inlaid with exotic South American woods, bookshelves built with clever hideaway



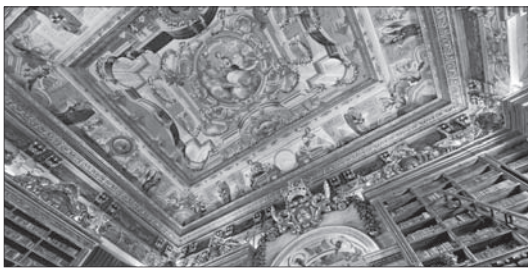
Rick Steves

even the "marble" triumphal archways that divide the library into rooms. Like its cleverly painted wooden archways, the library's painted ceiling is a successful work of trompe l'oeil illusion.

Since the library's books all date back to 1755 or earlier, its big front door is opened sparingly to keep out humidity. The library is accessible only during appointed times, and visitors have just 10 minutes to view it before the doors are opened just long enough to let them sneak quickly out. At night, resident bats come out to devour book-eating insects, providing a chemical-free way of protecting the collection.

One of Europe's oldest university sights is the Book of Kells, tucked away in the library of the venerable Trinity College in Dublin. This famous illuminated manuscript is a 1,200-year-old version of the four gospels, elaborately inked and meticulously illustrated by faithful monks, who went to great lengths in creating the 680-page book.

To make the vellum pages, they laboriously scraped and dried the skin of an estimated 185 calves. To get the most



DOMINIC ARIZONA BONUCCELLI/RickStevens.com

King Joao's Library, in Coimbra, Portugal, has a spectacular Baroque ceiling.

vivid pigments, they used powders from crushed bugs and precious stones. They wrote in Latin calligraphy and adorned their pages with big, flowery letters, detailed illustrations and animals crouching between sentences or intertwined with letters — a jungle of intricate designs, inhabited by tiny creatures both real and fanciful. (As this is a popular sight with long lines, it's best to buy timed-entry tickets in advance.)

In Salamanca, home to Spain's oldest university (established around 1218), the highlight is the grand facade of the school's entrance. Its intricate stonework is a great example of Spain's Plateresque style, represented by delicate, detail-packed, filigree-like carvings, with themes that make subtle statements about

intellectual independence from the medieval Church.

One of Europe's first, greatest, and most progressive universities, founded around the same time as Salamanca's, is in Padua, Italy.

Students lead tours of the university's grounds, where the highlight is a peek at Europe's first great anatomy theater (from 1595). Because of the Church's strict ban on autopsies, the university operated on a "don't ask, don't tell" basis. More than 300 students would pack this theater to watch professors dissect human cadavers — mostly bodies of criminals from another town.

Rick Steves (ricksteves.com) writes European travel guidebooks and hosts travel shows on public television and public radio. Email him at rick@ricksteves.com and follow his blog on Facebook.

## TOP TRAVEL PICKS

## Venice Film Festival has star power

The "Mostra Internazionale d'Arte Cinematografica della Biennale di Venezia," better known as the Venice Film Festival, is not only the oldest film festival in the world; alongside the Cannes Film Festival and Berlin International Film Festival, it's known as one of the "Big Three" in terms of its influence and prestige. Founded in 1932, the festival makes up part of the Venice Biennale, an umbrella term for an art exhibition and festivals of music, dance and theater organized in odd-numbered years.

Between the opening date of the festival's 76th edition on Aug. 28 and Sept. 7, some 90 films from around the world will be screened, including films in competition for the Golden Lion award, highly coveted awards. Spotting Hollywood's elites and international stars somewhere in Venice would not be an unheard-of possibility during these days. Actors rumored as likely to be in attendance in connection with the screenings of the films include, among others, Brad Pitt, Scarlett Johansson, Kristen Stewart and Joaquin Phoenix.

Films are shown at various venues on the Lido de Venezia, a seven-mile-long island separating Venice proper from the Adriatic Sea. The Lido is easily reached by public transportation on vaporetto water boats.



Karen Bradbury

Read more about things to do in the Europe Traveler blog: [strips.com/blogs/europe-traveler](https://www.strips.com/blogs/europe-traveler)

You need not be one of the industry's movers and shakers to attend a screening. Members of the public are allowed to attend a number of films across various categories on any given day. For example, a would-be attendee on Sept. 1 would have access to 22 titles in theory, although online tickets to films included in the festival's most prestigious sections such as Venezia 76 are sold out already. Ticket prices begin at 5.50 euros for classic films. And, subject to seating availability, free coupons for selected screenings are given away at the festival's box offices in Lido and in Venice one day beforehand.

Festival films are screened in their original language with Italian and English subtitles. Children under the age of six are not allowed to attend. Online: [labiennale.org/en](http://labiennale.org/en)

## Flea market in Lille

Lille, a city in northern France known for its pretty historical center and vibrant cultural life, has an additional claim to fame: host to what's billed as the biggest flea market in Europe.

In keeping with the city's past role as a hot spot for commerce, on the first weekend of September each year, buyers and sellers converge upon Lille for its famed Grande Braderie. From 8 a.m. Aug. 31 through 6 p.m. Sept. 1, two million bargain hunters will pound miles of pavement in hopes of discovering, haggling over and settling on a price for that perfect but, from silken gloves to a silver candelabra. In some areas, specific types of goods are typically sold; for example, antiques on the boulevard Louis XIV and de la Liberté, children's wares at the Gare St. Sauveur or comic books at the Palais des Beaux Arts.

A second reason to visit the Braderie is to explore its culinary traditions, and the dish of choice here is moules frites, or mussels and french fries. Local restaurants compete to see who can amass the highest pile of mussel shells outside their doors.

Other things to do in Lille through the weekend include taking in concerts or cheering on the runners in a half-marathon, which starts at 9 a.m. Aug. 31. The city is closed to traffic. Online: [braderie-de-lille.fr](http://braderie-de-lille.fr)



AP

Actress Naomi Watts poses for photographers during last year's Venice Film Festival. The annual event is now underway in Lido, Italy.

## Bierboerse in Karlsruhe

Over the warm months of the year, a traveling event known as the Bierboerse alights in several cities throughout Germany.

From Aug. 30 through Sept. 1, the Bierboerse makes a stop in Karlsruhe's pretty Schlossgarten, where 60 or so beer stands will pour more than 500 types of beer. Plenty of food is also available, and live music plays across two stages.

The stands are open 3 p.m.-midnight Aug. 30, 3 p.m.-1 a.m. Aug. 31 and 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Sept. 1. Entry is free. Online: [bierboerse.com/city/karlsruhe.htm](http://bierboerse.com/city/karlsruhe.htm)

## See Trier from on high

Get a bird's-eye view of Trier during the next few weeks as the world's largest mobile view-

ing tower is set up overlooking Germany's oldest city.

The City Skyliner is capable of carrying up to 60 people at a time. It gently ascends to a height of 266 feet, affording riders sweeping views of the city and countryside. The ride takes about seven minutes.

A turn on the City Skyliner costs 7 euros for those ages 11 and older and 4 euros for children ages 3 to 10. It opens at 11 a.m. daily except on Sundays, when it opens at noon, and closes at 7 p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 9 p.m. on Sundays, Mondays and Wednesdays, and 10 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays. The giant tower will remain in place at the Roter Turm parking area on Mustorstrasse through Oct. 6. Online: [trier-info.de/englich/city-skyliner](http://trier-info.de/englich/city-skyliner)

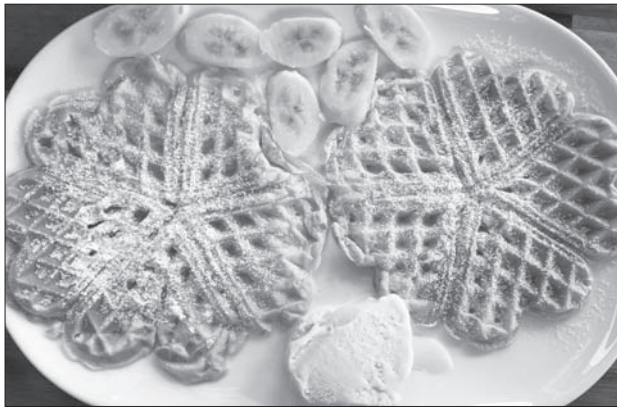


## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

## Europe



Currywurst is served in a "stork's nest" of delightfully golden and crisp waffle fries at Kaiserslautern's Storchenturm.



PHOTOS BY CHAD GARLAND/Stars and Stripes

Available with fruit toppings such as grapes and bananas (left, above) or vanilla ice cream (above), all-you-can-eat waffles were about \$8 at Storchenturm, a cafe/bistro/bar in Kaiserslautern, Germany.

## Office lunch etiquette you should ignore

By JACOB BROGAN  
The Washington Post

Packing your lunch. It is, inevitably, a solitary form of labor, but its results will play out in collective space. What, then, of the etiquette of the packed lunch?

First, you should ignore most of the advice

## COMMENTARY

that others dish out about plating your workplace dishes. Contrary to almost all received wisdom, you should feel free to heat up smelly food in the microwave. For one thing, the attempt to restrict culinary odors is, all too often, about policing the cultures and cuisines of nonwhite people. In any case, it's possible to be irritated by all sorts of food-related things, including the mere sound of chewing. As the Kitchen's Rachel Sugar puts it, "You hate the smell of curry. I hate the smell of tuna, and yet we must coexist together in functional harmony."

Instead of living in fear of office puritans, aim to delight them. By all means, perfume the floor with spices and citrus and oil. Your coworkers may act irritated, but really they're just going to be jealous. When they ask after the smells, take their query for what it really is: an opportunity to brag about what a terrific cook you are.

That said, you absolutely should not actually cook your food in the shared microwave — with some exceptions given for prepackaged meals designed to be prepared that way. The odoriferousness of fish, for example, is entirely excusable, but nuking it in an environment that will turn it to rubber? That's just rude to the fish itself. Your meal, be it leftover spaghetti or mapo tofu, should be largely complete by the time you leave home in the morning.

You must also prepare your meal with an eye toward the possibility of theft. While some etiquette guides instruct you on how to do once the miscreant has made off with your food, you're better off discouraging them from taking it in the first place. Labeling may help, but you're better off storing your food in containers that no one wants to look at in the first place. Better to craft your homemade delicacies in brown paper bags or used cottage cheese containers (washed, of course).

But the most important thing to remember about bringing your lunch to work is that you will be eating it early. Maybe it's the effort that goes into readying it in the first place, but you'll surely end up stuffing your face before the clock rings noon. And that's fine, but it also demands that you follow one last etiquette guideline, in kindness to your future self: Always bring an extra snack. After all, you're sure to be hungry again by late afternoon.

# Storchenturm returns to the nest

## Casual eatery makes a welcome reappearance in Kaiserslautern

By CHAD GARLAND  
Stars and Stripes

The Kaiserslautern cafe/bistro/bar Storchenturm has done an on-again, off-again routine both baffling and familiar to me after more than three years living in this town.

I was just becoming a regular last fall when I heard it had shut down. Not "would," but "had," seemingly without warning. I didn't have long to mourn: It reopened this spring, though fitfully.

One sunny afternoon this month, a post on the fledgling Facebook page of the Stork, as I call it, advertised new food specials. I quickly invited a friend to join me for \$8 all-you-can-eat waffles *al fresco*, optimistic the blue skies would hold out.

But first, I messaged the cafe to make sure it was indeed open. One never knows in these parts. Things seem to change as quickly as the weather.

The day before, the same friend and I had stepped out from under leaden skies and light rain into a bar whose door was open, if not inviting. Two employees promptly told us it was closed.

Stepping back into the drizzle, we remarked on stereotypes of German hospitality before venturing on to a burger joint we'd previously enjoyed. We were pretty sure it would be open.

Along the way, we mused on the vagaries of local business practices, where operating hours, let alone days or large swaths of the months in summer, were often unpredictable.

Shops and eateries that seem very popular tend to suddenly snap out of existence. Then sometimes they pop back into being as unexpectedly. Others seem never to open or close as quickly as they open.

Both of us rattled off recent examples, several in the section of the pedestrian zone we were then on. Storchenturm, about a block further down, fit squarely on the list.

We had played Scrabble at an outdoor table over drinks on a few pleasant evenings there last September. Then it closed "permanently" before our planned



### AFTER HOURS GERMANY

rematch in early October.

In mid-March, balloons and streamers decorated its windows. The local German paper heralded its rebirth. But weeks later it seemed stillborn.

A rapid response to my Facebook message in mid-August, however, confirmed that the eatery nestled behind the Rewe shopping center on Stiftsplatz was indeed alive — again — its waffles standing by.

After finding a cozy outdoor table, my friend and I ordered coffee drinks. They turned out to be about standard for Germany.

I also ordered a currywurst, which came in a "stork's nest" of delightfully golden and crisp waffle fries. I don't want to think about what role the wurst, again about average, played in the extended nest metaphor.

The waffles themselves — one pair arrived with grapes and bananas, another with bananas and vanilla ice cream — were a thin variety made up of five heart-shaped petals, as if a crepe and an Eggo had a brood of underfed flower children, dusted with powdered sugar.

I was not ambivalent about these waffles. I'd have much preferred their distant cousin, the chunky, deep-welled Belgian street food variety, crusted with a sugary clearcoat.

In the end, the best part of the new Storchenturm was what charmed us in its earlier incarnation — fast, diligent servers and comfy outdoor seating on a lightly trafficked side street.

But, just as we paid our tab, dark clouds rolled in overhead and we felt a light springing.

garland.chad@stripes.com



Storchenturm's cappuccino, left, is on par with the usual java served in Germany. The cafe/bistro/bar, above, is nestled behind the Rewe shopping center on Stiftsplatz.

## STORCHENTURM

Location: Munchstrasse 12, Kaiserslautern  
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Priest: Entrees \$7-\$10, Drinks \$3-\$5

Information: Phone: 0631-892-39717

— Chad Garland

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Europe

## Architectural destination

Escape Venice's tourist crush with a trip to Vicenza, home of Renaissance great Andrea Palladio

By BLAIR KAMIN  
Chicago Tribune

If you want to break away from the crowds that make Venice a poster child for the term "overtourism" and you love architecture, there is one place you must go: nearby Vicenza, a showcase for the work of the renowned Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio.

Palladio, who lived from 1508 to 1580, drew inspiration from the architecture of ancient Greece and Rome, transforming these models into masterpieces that influenced everything from English country houses to Thomas Jefferson's Monticello.

The most famous of his works, the transcendent hilltop mansion called the Villa Rotonda, is a short taxi, bus or bike ride from Vicenza's compact, largely car-free town center, where the main street bears Palladio's name.

The town center itself is stocked with impressive Palladio buildings, including numerous town palaces, or palazzi, one of which houses an excellent and engaging museum devoted entirely to the architect.

In the surrounding countryside are Palladio's villas, where the architect combined opulent living quarters and working farm buildings into coherent complexes that married nature with culture, rusticity and urbanity.

Located about 40 miles west of Venice, with a population of about 112,000, Vicenza is an ideal day trip. I took a red, sleek-nosed Italo train from Venice's Santa Lucia station. (Round-trip fare was just under 38 euros, or roughly \$42. The trip, one-way, took 39 minutes.)

Vicenza once was part of the far-flung Venetian empire, a status still signaled by a pair of towering classical columns that frame an entry to its main square. One is topped by the ubiquitous symbol of Venice, the winged lion.

But Palladio's buildings gave Vicenza a distinct identity. They were classical, weighty and vigorously three dimensional — and, thus, recognizably different from the delicate, highly decorated Gothic facades that line Venice's canals.

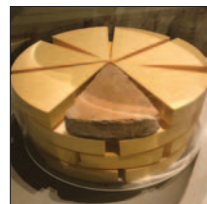
Along Vicenza's main square, for example, is an imposing public building, the Palladian Basilica, that the architect redesigned in the mid-16th century after a portion of the original Gothic exterior collapsed. Palladio, then just 38 years old and a relative unknown, wrapped the building in a two-level stack of exterior passageways, or loggias. Their arched openings and white marble possess the sculptural power and depth of Roman architecture. And God is in the details.

Like an accordion, the rectangular openings on either side



PHOTOS BY BLAIR KAMIN, CHICAGO TRIBUNE/TNS

**Above:** A statue of architect Andrea Palladio can be seen next to one of his early buildings, the Palladian Basilica, in the heart of Vicenza's historic town center. **Top right:** The Palladio Museum in Vicenza, Italy, features displays like this example of triangular bricks that enabled the museum's namesake to form round columns from inexpensive materials.



of each arch vary in width, an "elastic" solution that accommodates the original building's uneven dimensions.

A good place to take it all in is a small adjacent plaza named for Palladio and adorned with a statue of the bearded architect as well as likenesses of architectural tools and bits of classical decoration.

The town center offers numerous other opportunities to see Palladio's genius.

Assorted palazzi reveal the skill with which the architect manipulated the classical orders — Doric, Ionic and Corinthian — to make individual statements for each of his wealthy clients. Palladio also designed the dome of Vicenza's cathedral and an elegant entryway on one of its sides.

Plaques at each site associated with the architect, written in English as well as Italian, enable visitors to take free, self-led tours. Guided tours are also available for a fee.

Among the must-sees in the town center are Palladio's Teatro Olimpico (admission: 11 euros), which claims to be the world's first indoor theater. It features a dazzling interior space whose curved seating tiers, frescoes, statuary and robust, classically inspired architecture evoke ancient Roman amphitheaters. The theater, still in use today, was completed after Palladio's death.

Another mandatory stop is the Palladio Museum (8 euros), which occupies one of the architect's town palaces, the Palazzo Barbaran da Porto. The museum expertly tells the story of Palladio's life and work.

He was born in nearby Padua and worked as a stonecutter before moving to Vicenza in 1524.

Seizing on the importance of disseminating knowledge through the printed page, Palladio published his famous treatise, "The Four Books on Architecture," in 1570. According to the museum, it's not known where, or from what causes, he died.

As visitors pass through the museum, they are treated to large-scale architectural models of Palladio's buildings; projected images of smart (and smartly dressed) architectural historians discussing his work; and beautiful, high-ceilinged rooms, some adorned with frescoes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

## FROM PAGE 30

Exhibits show how Palladio relied on form and proportions rather than lavish materials and elaborate decoration to create some of his majestic buildings. For example, he reintroduced a special plaster compound, called marmorino, that coated low-cost materials such as wood and brick to make them resemble stone. Through a clear case, we see triangular bricks, arranged like wedges of cheese, that reveal how Palladio built freestanding columns out of the inexpensive material rather than costly marble.

No visit is complete without a stop at the Villa Rotonda, which was commissioned in 1566 by farmer-papal assistant Paolo Almerico and sits about a mile and a half southeast of Vicenza's train station.

A dome inscribed in a cube with four identical projecting temple fronts, the landmark is the iconic Palladian villa and a symbol of the Renaissance—a work of geometric order that is the architectural equivalent of Leonardo da Vinci's Vitruvian Man.

The villa's elaborate interior is only open to the public for tours on Wednesday and Saturday (exterior only: 5 euros; exterior and interior: 10 euros), but the exterior and its grounds alone justify a visit. (Private tours can also be arranged.)

The building itself is surprisingly austere—magnificent but not opulent; grand but not grandiose. The sculptures atop its temple fronts and on the sides of its porches are the chief decorative flourishes.

You approach from the bottom of a slope, able to see only one facade. Then, as you ascend the hill, the house can be viewed in the round—a perfect sculptural object, perfectly placed for the arcing sun to bring its surfaces to life.

On a hot summer day, insects chirp in the background while fields and hills unfold in the distance. Benches allow for a peaceful spot to admire the building. Its porches provide elevated vantage points from which to view the countryside.

This is an ideal building for an idyllic site—a contemplative retreat from the bustle and business of the city.

It's also a model whose influence would extend far into the future.

The 17th-century English architect Inigo Jones, famous for his symmetrical, well-proportioned country houses, would follow example, as would Thomas Jefferson, who built Monticello in 1772 and his "academical village" at the University of Virginia in the early 19th century.

You can see more of Palladio's work back in Venice, where two of his great religious structures—the Church of the Redentore and the church for the monastery of San Giorgio Maggiore—occupy the spectacular waterfront.

The bell tower of the latter contains an elevator that leads you to an outdoor observation deck with stunning views of Venice and its watery environs.

It's another way, besides a trip to Palladio's Vicenza, to escape Venice's thick crowds.

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# STAY





## WEEKEND: TRAVEL

## Pacific



# Take your time

PHOTOS BY AYA ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes

The white sand beaches of Taketomi Island, southwest of Okinawa, are among the most popular tourist destinations in Japan.

## Roads are few, the pace is slow and locals and visitors alike are happy on Taketomi Island

By AYA ICHIHASHI  
*Stars and Stripes*

As soon as you step onto Taketomi Island, southwest of Okinawa, it's impossible not to notice that time flows much slower here than anywhere else. Paved roads are few, and so are automobiles and traffic lights. There are no fluorescent-lit 24-hour convenience stores. A water buffalo ambling through the neighborhood is heavy traffic.

About 360 people live on Taketomi, enough to make a small high-school class. The island, part of the Yaeyama Archipelago, is just over 5 miles in circumference and only a 10-minute ferry ride from Ishigaki Island. It's a little less than 200 miles from Taiwan. From Naha to Ishigaki, it's about a 50-minute flight.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 33



Aged and distressed stone walls, red-tile roofs, shisa and bougainvillea are typical of traditional Ryukyuan-style houses on Taketomi Island.

## WEEKEND: FOOD &amp; DINING

Pacific

## FROM PAGE 32

Once on the island, I pedaled to white-sand Kondoi Beach, ranked the third-best destination by travelers in Japan this year by TripAdvisor. The sand is white, light and fluffy, and the beach stretches for a quarter-mile.

Famous for its sunsets and starry skies, Kondoi can entertain from morning through night. The water there is shallow and normally as calm as a backyard pool, so it's a good spot for families with small children.

There is no public transportation, so getting around on the island comes down to walking, biking or taking a taxi.

Local shops will rent you a bicycle for 300 yen (about \$3) per hour. Most roads are sandy, so take care riding your bike.

Biking around the island under a blazing summer sun, you'll need some refreshment. I strongly recommend grabbing a shaved ice or cold beverage at local kiosks to cool down every few hours.

A taxi for a private tour costs 3,500 yen (about \$33) for a half-hour but because Taketomi is so small, you can simply walk around as well.

The island is famous for its beautifully preserved red-tile roofs and traditional Ryukyuan-style houses and neighborhoods. Strict rules about building on the island preserve its look.

Repairs, new construction or additions must be approved by the local assembly and be done in the traditional architectural style. For example, the walls must be made of coral stone.

A favorite pastime is looking for shisa — small, historic statues that depict a cross between a lion and a dog and are believed to ward off evil spirits. Each shisa is unique and typically found on rooftops or on stone walls.

Strolling the neighborhood, I came across a cart pulled by a water buffalo walking next to the green and pink bougainvillea, past the gray stone walls and red-tile-roofed houses — it was nothing but a Taketomi moment.

I am not from Taketomi, nor from Okinawa, but I felt a twinge of nostalgia and teared up a little.

A ride on a water buffalo cart is one of the biggest tourist attractions on the island. It takes about 30 minutes to go around the neighborhood and costs 1,200 yen (about \$11.30) for adults



**A water buffalo cart goes slow while a guide sings Okinawan folk songs on Taketomi Island.**

and 600 yen (about \$5.65) for children.

Most visitors come from Ishigaki for the day, but overnight lodging is available on Taketomi for a quiet island weekend.

About 10 minshuku-style inns on the island offer guests traditional futon bedding on a tatami floor. There is also one big resort hotel, Hoshinoya Taketomi Island, that offers 50 villa-style rooms.

For dining, my favorite is the Kanifu restaurant and its Salisbury steak lunch set, made from Ishigaki beef, for 1,500 yen (about \$14).

The Taketomi neighborhood almost feels like a movie theme park. However, respect private property — be careful taking photographs — and walking around shirtless is prohibited.

I recommend going to Kaiji Beach to look for star sand. It's not really sand; it's what remains of microscopic organisms. You can buy it at the souvenir shop, but it's more fun to find your own Taketomi keepsake.

After having a blast bicycling around the island, dipping into the waters, eating the chilled mango shaved ice and a delicious meal of Ishigaki beef and strolling around the beautiful neighborhood, I was ready to hop back on the ferry to Ishigaki.

ichihashi.aya@stripes.com



**PHOTOS BY AYA ICHIHASHI/Stars and Stripes**

**Taketomi Island, southwest of Okinawa, is famous for its traditional Ryukyuan-style houses and white sandy roads.**



**PHOTOS BY MATTHEW KEELER/Stars and Stripes**

**Freshly prepared pizza awaits at Pizza School near Osan Air Base in Songtan, South Korea.**

**Left: The hot chicken pizza is reminiscent of spicy chicken wings.**

## Head back to Pizza School

Delicious, affordable Korean chain warrants further study

BY MATTHEW KEELER  
Stars and Stripes

**I**t's not hard to find a pizza restaurant conveniently located outside most military installations. Poke around any corner and you're bound to find a hot slice within meatball-throwing distance.

However, a bit further beyond the main shopping and entertainment district outside Osan Air Base is an alternative worth the walk: Pizza School, a South Korean franchise with locations across the country.

Decorated in all things yellow, this small and vibrant establishment located just over half a mile from the main gate made me imagine myself riding the bus on my way to school as a young kid.

Whether you decide to eat in or carry out, the franchise offers an English menu with more than 20 different styles of pizza that will curb any appetite you bring to the register, all for a great price.

A basic eight-slice, 12-inch-diameter pepperoni pizza will strip only 7,000 won (about \$6) from your hard-earned summer paycheck. Pizzas top out at 12,000 won for options such as the chicken filet or Mexican bite.

During a visit with my son, we ordered the hot chicken pizza (8,000 won), and within approximately 10 minutes we were sharing a delicious pizza that tasted as if we were eating spicy chicken wings instead.

The eatery uses a typical conveyor pizza oven, which cooks the crust and cheese nicely. For those who prefer a thin crust, this pie measured about one-eighth-inch thick. For just a few dollars more, take the cheese to the extreme with a cheese crust (2,000 won) or cheese bites (3,000 won).

If you find yourself in a quandary over a selection, the staff recommends any of the top three favorites: the potato pizza (8,000 won), grilled pork-a-bite pizza (12,000 won) or the beef quesadilla pizza (12,000 won). Personally, I'd enroll in Pizza School full time to study quesadilla pizza.

Pizza School offers a few side choices, including chicken tenders (4,000 won), wings (4,900 won), shrimp rings and fries (3,500 won). The restaurant is very generous with its toppings, so the pizzas are already large enough to indulge two adults.

Don't expect to have a beer with your pizza. Pizza School serves just a few selections of bottled and canned soda, along with a free self-serve water station.

keeler.matthew@stripes.com



**More than 20 different varieties of fresh pizza, prepared in approximately 10 minutes, are available at Pizza School.**

## PIZZA SCHOOL

**Location:** 4 Jisan 2-ro 96beon-gil, Songbuk-dong, Pyeongtaek, Gyeonggi-do, or GPS 37.079770, 127.061098

**Directions:** Less than ¼ of a mile from the Osan Air Base main gate; walking or taking a taxi is recommended

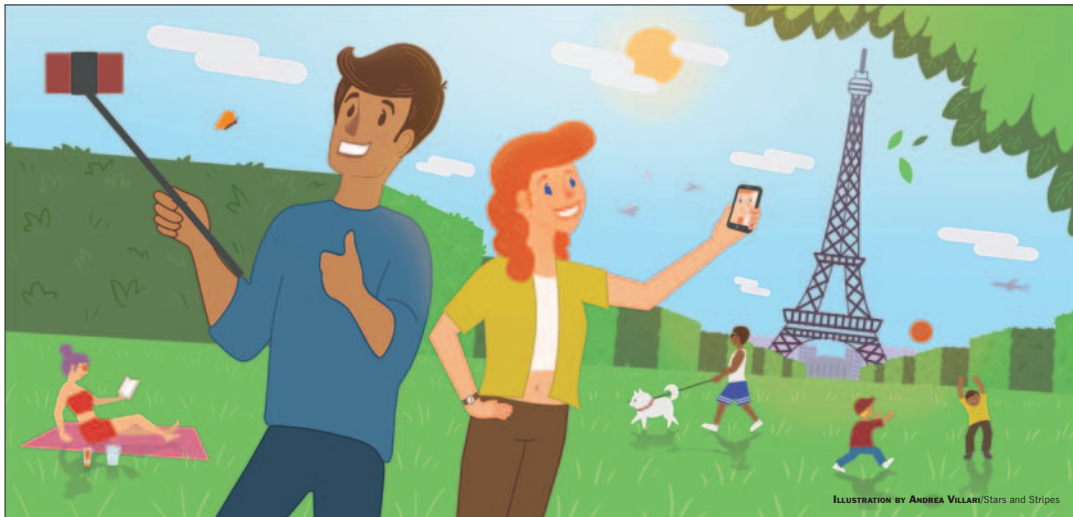
**Hours:** 6:10-30 p.m. Mondays; 11 a.m.-10:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday; closed national holidays

**Prices:** Pizza ranges from 7,000-12,000 won; for cheesy crust, add 2,000-3,000 won

**Dress:** Casual  
**Information:** Phone: 031-663-0303; online: pizzaschool.net

— Matthew Keeler

## WEEKEND: TRAVEL



# What we lose when we travel for the 'gram

Social media changes the way people choose, experience new destinations

By CHRISTINE AMOROSE MERRILL  
*Los Angeles Times*

Instead of standing in awe in front of natural wonders, I've lately been distracted by the sheer number of selfies going on (and by the inadvertent poke of a selfie stick). Tourists show up to a historical monument that has deep meaning, take one photo and immediately take off — without pausing to absorb the significance of the spot.

This is what it means to travel the world in the age of social media, where it's more about sharing a stunning virtual postcard and less about the wonder and adventure of the journey.

According to recent surveys, many people admit to choosing a travel destination based on how it will be perceived on social media. They are on a quest to earn points among their group of IRL and virtual friends by "discovering" the newest, coolest, most off-the-beaten-trail-est kind of place.

Once they get there, they often experience it through a cellphone lens instead of with their own senses.

This depressing fact deeply resonates with me. As an on-again, off-again travel blogger, my travel plans over the last 10 years have been heavily influenced by what I discover and what I can share on Instagram. I've taken the requisite shots in Paris in front of the Eiffel Tower and in Tokyo at Shibuya Crossing, and I've relished comments from friends and strangers who traveled to Slovenia or the island of Curacao after seeing my posts.

At its best, social media as a travel guide exposes you to places you might never have considered while showcasing the beauty of countries, cities or corners often overlooked. But it also limits the way we experience the world, contributing to overtourism (and its very real implications for climate change and carbon emissions) while quietly and quickly eroding the sense

**COMMENTARY** of wonder and human connection that result from immersion in an unfamiliar place.

What do we lose when we travel for the 'gram? A genuine connection to those around us, the people who live and work and serve us in a place that we've traveled hundreds of miles to experience — and then forsaken for the tenuous attempt to impress Facebook friends and Instagram followers.

This behavior has pushed aside what makes travel special: the total immersion in another culture and the distance from the monotony of everyday life. You can't escape if you're constantly logging on, and you can't stumble over an unexpected gem if you're sticking to your Google Maps route. Wearing headphones blocks out the thrilling cacophony of an unfamiliar language, and scrolling through your phone instead of people-watching at a cafe or chatting up a local bartender robs you of interaction in real life.

The pervasive nature of social media has forced me to take a deeper look at why and how I travel — especially as I struggle with whether to keep travel blogging. I'm not immune to the powerful dopamine release of gathering likes, and I'm definitely guilty of booking trips to align with my Instagram aesthetic, which leans toward blue skies, turquoise seas and colorful buildings.

But if I'm mainly viewing my travels through a screen — and constantly trying to shape my trip's narrative in real time — am I taking the time to truly appreciate where I am?

Being loosely connected to the world of travel blogging means my social media feeds are full of people who travel full time and who make money by making their destinations look as

enticing as possible. I've been on the other side of that lens all too often and know that the experience is rarely as picture-perfect as it seems. For every brilliantly filtered, captioned and hashtagged photo, there are uncomfortable situations the never get mentioned — delayed flights, lumpy hotel beds, food poisonings. Why ruin someone's fantasy that they too can have a vacation as wonderful as mine?

One of my favorite books is Martha Gellhorn's "Travels With Myself and Another," published in 1978. The renowned war correspondent, "the best travel horror stories, a collection of all of the things that went wrong. From her perspective, "the only aspect of our travels that is guaranteed to hold an audience is disaster."

On my first vacation with my now-husband, we hit a pothole that gave our rental car three flat tires late at night in the Dominican Republic. We were "rescued" by military policemen toting machine guns. In person, I rarely bring out the gorgeous ecolodge with an infinity pool that awaited us just past the city of Barahona, but our road-trip horror story gets whipped out anytime the conversation turns to travel. The photos of that trip shared on Instagram are beautiful but also boring — another swaying palm tree on a beach! They are tiny billboards for wish-fulfillment with no sign of the drama that made the trip for us.

The best, most memorable moments in travel are often the ones that can't be captured in a filtered frame or summarized in a pithy caption. But when we only share the highlights, we also create a false ideal: When people follow the social media guide to travel, it's easy to be disappointed by the chaos and imperfection that awaits in real life. In reality, the disasters are as much a part of the travel experience as the highlights.

This isn't a plea for a mass digital detox, but rather a reminder of the joy that can come from the unexpected. Instead of packing the selfie stick, ask a stranger to take your photo. Take out your earbuds and say hello (maybe even in the local language). Put down Yelp and ask your taxi driver the best place to get a cheap and authentic dinner.

The constant search for the perfect and the photogenic, and the planning of a vacation around what will play on Instagram, won't deliver on the promise of what travel does best: immerse you in the good, the bad and the beautiful of an unfamiliar place.

Christine Amorose Merrill is a travel and lifestyle blogger based in San Diego. She can be found on Instagram at @cestchristine.

If I'm mainly viewing my travels through a screen, am I taking the time to truly appreciate where I am?



## WEEKEND: LIFESTYLE



PHOTOS BY GINA FERAZZI/Los Angeles Times

Blind magician Chad Allen, photographed Aug. 1, lost his sight and now writes an audio comic book featuring a blind heroine in Los Angeles.

# ‘You see with your brain’

## Audio comic book believed to be one of the first written by blind author, meant for blind audience

By JESSICA GELT  
Los Angeles Times

**C**had Allen was feeling helpless. Not because he happened to be blind. He had a healthy handle on that. It was the insanely dark news cycle that was dragging him down. The sense that the world was falling apart and he could do nothing about it.

Mounting anxiety before the 2016 presidential election propelled him to do what he does best: tell stories. He created an audio comic book titled “Unseen,” featuring a blind heroine, an assassin from Afghanistan named Afsana. It is believed to be one of the first audio comic books by a blind author, made for a blind audience.

Working in a highly visual art form, Allen managed to create an auditory experience that closely mimics the sensation of reading a comic book. A whooshing sound occurs whenever a panel changes; the intentionally stilted delivery of lines, as well as narration that prompts mental images, conjure a feeling of being inside a high-stakes comic book world. Aside from a slick red-and-black graphic image of Afsana created for the cover, “Unseen” has no visual art whatsoever.

The work tied for first place in a competition for blind or visually impaired comic book writers held by the now-defunct Comics Empower store for the blind. Allen’s audio comic book also was selected for the current exhibition “Self, Made” at the Exploratorium museum of science, art and human perception in San Francisco.

“Chad’s character is written for a blind audience, but all of us can identify with her because we can identify with the experience of being underestimated,” says Melissa Alexander, the director of public programs at the Exploratorium. “His specific experience becomes more broadly applicable.”

The “Unseen” exhibit is an exploration of human identity that uses lenses of race, gender, disability and more

to help visitors explore their own biases and discover their unique identities.

Allen is thrilled to have his work included in “Self, Made” because it validates one of his main objectives in writing “Unseen.”

“You don’t see art with your eyes. You don’t see anything with your eyes. All your eyes do is filter light. You see with your brain, and that’s what I’m trying to teach to people more than anything,” Allen says, sitting in a basement classroom at Hollywood’s Magic Castle, where he has been a member magician for 20 years, wowing guests with tricks they mistakenly believe one would need sight to perform.

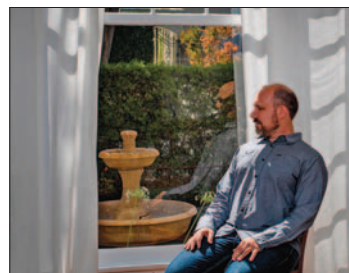
“I created Afsana as a barrier between my helplessness and what was really going on in the world, because she could do something. She was bad ass. She was an assassin,” he says.

Allen is quick to point out that Afsana does not have superpowers like Marvel’s Daredevil. She has a skill. Her skill is to slip in and out of places without being seen. She is not seen because people with disabilities are often not seen. They can feel invisible to society at large, Allen says.

The first installment of Afsana’s journey, which is available for streaming at [unseencomic.com](http://unseencomic.com), finds her at the American border with Mexico in a not-so-distant future, when a dictatorial president is rounding up immigrants and conducting scientific experiments on disabled people with some very spooky results.

Afsana’s mission is to destroy the lab where evil Dr. Magnus conducts these experiments, a task she completes with the aid of a cane, an earpiece that delivers instructions (including where to steer a stolen bus) and a special black material that absorbs all light, shrouding her in darkness.

Allen, 46, grew up loving comic books. He was not born blind. He was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa,



**“I created (blind comic book heroine) Afsana as a barrier between my helplessness and what was really going on in the world, because she could do something,” Allen says. “Unseen” is believed to be one of the first audio comic books by a blind author, made for a blind audience. Stream the first edition at [unseencomic.com](http://unseencomic.com).**

a genetic disorder that causes vision loss, at the age of 15, around the time his parents were divorcing. His world was thrown into turmoil in a way his fragile teen psyche had trouble processing.

Stories were what saved him — telling them and building them via role-playing games. Making them as fantastical and far-out and complicated as possible. There is rabid public curiosity about blindness, says his wife, Melissa Eccles, and people are always asking the damndest questions. When their 9-year-old son, Harrison, was a baby, Allen would take him on walks. People either treated him like a superhero or a menace to society, Eccles says with a bemused smile.

The lack of cultural education around blindness is partly what Afsana is meant to rectify, says Pamela Allen (no relation), director of the Louisiana Center for the Blind.

“It is so important for blind kids to have superheroes and heroes who are blind, and for sighted kids to realize that disability does not mean inability; it merely means utilizing our other senses to accomplish our goals,” Pamela Allen writes in an email. “Afsana shatters gender stereotypes as well. She affirms that it is not the lack of sight that is the issue but the low expectations that society has.”

## WEEKEND: MUSIC

## REVIEW

# With 'Lover,' Swift finally makes an album for adults

By MIKAEL WOOD  
*Los Angeles Times*

It's no wonder she nixed that dopey lyric telling kids that spelling is fun: On "Lover," Taylor Swift turns out not to be speaking to the children who made her one of pop's biggest stars.

When she released "Me!" her seventh studio album's oppressively cheerful lead single, the song contained a much-maligned bit in which Swift and her duet partner, Brendon Urie of Panic! at the Disco, made like a pair of Nick Jr. hosts dispensing hollow after-school encouragement. Yet listen to "Me!" as the 16th of 18 tracks on "Lover," which hit streaming services Aug. 22, and you'll find that the line has quietly disappeared; now you hear a marching band doing its best to thump the memory out of your head.

The change does only a little to improve the still-saccharine "Me!" At least it brings the song into closer alignment with the rest of the impressive "Lover," which wastes no opportunity for Swift, 29, to demonstrate that she's, y'know, a grown-up.

"I'm drunk in the back of the car," she sings in the pulsating "Cruel Summer," one of many references to booze along with those in "Death by a Thousand Cuts" ("I get drunk, but it's not enough / 'Cause the morning comes and you're not my baby") and "London Boy" (where a cute British guy is like a magnet pulling her away from "Springsteen, faded blue jeans and Tennessee whiskey").

Other songs contemplate sex in the type of language that adults use — not showily explicit but with a casual knowledge of bodies in close spaces. "The old Taylor" might be dead, as Swift declared on 2017's "Reputation," but Old Taylor now walks among us.

It's not just these totems of maturity that make "Lover" feel so attuned to an older mind-set (even as pop is in the midst of its youngest moment in years). Nor is it merely the sound of the album, which moves past the precision-gear synth-pop for which Swift has been known since 2012's "Red" into choppy new wave ("Paper Rings"), Mazzy Star-like dream-folk ("Lover"), even humid '80s-era R&B ("False God," complete with saxophone).

"Reputation" did all that too, albeit in the context of the singer's various celebrity feuds, which generally do more to infantilize famous people than to convince anyone they should be taken seriously.

Rather, Swift demonstrates a kind of emotional wisdom on "Lover" — co-produced by her and studio wizards such as Jack Antonoff, Joel Little and Frank Dukes — that feels like the simple, if hard-won, result of nothing but experience. "False God" invokes religion to ponder how eager we are to fool ourselves with promises of perfection; "Soon You'll Get Better," inspired by Swift's mother's cancer diagnosis, offers the bitter taste of hope in a hospital room (and cuts only deeper for featuring the Dixie Chicks on pinprick backing vocals).

Then there's "Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince," which appears to be ... a full-on denunciation of the good ol' U.S.A.: "My team is losing, battered and bruising," she sings, finally picking a side in the culture war she once tried to float above.

Elsewhere, the song layers on some pat high school imagery enough that anyone who might want to discount the allegory could reasonably do so. But little about the clear-eyed "Lover" leads you to believe that Taylor Swift is one of those people.

■ **Ranking the tracks, Page 37**



## WEEKEND: MUSIC

To hear Taylor Swift tell it, the reason her new album is the longest since is ever made is because she set out to capture the fullness of love — “all the captivating, spellbinding, maddening, devastating, red, blue, gray, golden aspects of it,” as she writes in the liner notes to “Lover,” which came out Aug. 23 and immediately sold nearly half a million copies in the United States, according to Billboard.

But if Swift equally values each of the 18 songs on her seventh studio album, that doesn’t mean the rest of us have to. Behold, then, this critical roundup of every tune on “Lover,” ranked from worst to best, with a point of comparison for each to an earlier selection from Swift’s catalog. You can decide for yourself which song is supposed to represent gray.

**18. “Mel”**  
Devoted Swift fans know that her albums’ lead singles are often red herrings, and thankfully that turned out to be the case again with the wise and tender “Lover,” which nonetheless announced itself back in April with this excruciatingly childish marching-band jam. Nix it from your customized “Lover” playlist and forget that one of pop’s smartest lyricists ever rhymed “I’m the only one of me” with “Baby, that’s the fun of me.” See also: “Shake It Off”

**17. “London Boy”**  
Much of “Lover” is thought to concern Swift’s very private relationship with the British actor Joe Alwyn. Here, though — following a cute spooner introduced by Idris Elba, who duly delivers better — she seems to be directing curiosity about her romance by hauling out every jolly old cliché she can think of.

See also: “Welcome to New York”  
**16. “I Forgot That You Existed”**  
Like an unwelcome leftover from 2017’s revenge-melodrama “Reputation,” “Lover’s” opener goes back to the poisoned well that was (is?) Swift’s feud with Kanye West and Kim Kardashian. “How many days did I spend thinking ‘bout how you did me wrong, wrong, wrong?’ she sings, and you can be sure she’ll count them up when she’s finally done.

See also: “This Is Why We Can’t Have Nice Things”  
**15. “You Need to Calm Down”**  
Swift’s overweening attempt to present herself as an ally of LGBTQ folks — whose targeting by bigots this song likens to a superstar’s bad review — makes it easy to roast how skillfully she’s almost-rapping over producer Joel Little’s crisp electro-trap beat.

See also: “Blank Space”  
**14. “Daylight”**  
In keeping with tradition, Swift dotes “Lover” with a slow, slightly bleary number about cleaning up the rubble behind her (if only to make room for her more to come). This one’s plenty pretty, though the melody never quite lifts off in the way it seems to want to.

See also: “New Year’s Day”  
**13. “Afterglow”**  
“I’m the one who burned us down,” Swift sings in this metaphor-laden apology to an ex whose devotion she just couldn’t match. Elsewhere she compares her behavior to that of a crooked jailer, a reckless chemist and a boxer fighting with no gloves.

See also: “Back to December”

# Taylor Swift's ‘Lover’ All 18 songs ranked




## 12. “I Think He Knows”

The chorus has Swift, freshly enamored of a dude “with that boyish look that I like in a man,” “skipping down 16th Avenue,” — almost certainly a reference to Nashville’s Music Row, where she started her career. Yet the funky, finger-snappy groove has nothing to do with country music; it feels like Swift’s response to Billie Eilish’s close-miked ASMR-core. See also: “Delicate”

## 11. “Death By a Thousand Cuts”

Swift says this anatomy of a breakup was inspired by the Netflix romantic comedy “Someone Great,” and indeed her writing is especially visual here. “I look through the windows of this love, even though we boarded them off,” she sings, which — weeps.

See also: “White Horse”

## 10. “It’s Nice to Have a Friend”

Co-produced by Swift with Frank Dukes and Louis Bel (the new-to-her studio team behind hits by Post Malone and Camila Cabello), here’s an ethereal steel-drum-and-chor experiment that ranks among the strangest things the singer has ever released. Bonus points for the spooky “Big Little Lies” vibes.

See also: “Clean”

## 9. “Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince”

Speaking of rich white women! What begins as a standard-issue Lana Del Rey rip — a hokey, beat-dreamy synth, lots of ironic American imagery — somehow turns into one of 2019’s unlabeled protest songs: a bitter indictment, at least if you want to read the high-school allegory that way, of the systematized privilege that enabled Swift’s ascent. “You play stupid games,” she sings, “you win stupid prizes.”

See also: “Wildest Dreams”

## 8. “The Man”

More pointed commentary, in this case regarding gender inequality, from a once-apologetic pop idol whose reluctance to speak out in the past didn’t mean she wasn’t taking notes. See also: “Dear John”

## 7. “False God”

Swift is nobody’s idea of a great R&B singer, but “False God” blends sex and religion with a breathy assurance she’s never mustered before. See also: “Dress”

## 6. “The Archer”

Producer Jack Antonoff, Swift’s primary creative partner on “Lover,” said on Twitter that he and the singer made this gorgeous and jittery head-rush in “about 2 hours,” which sounds right: It tunnels deep into a single emotional state — the fear that you’ve become the villain in the movie of your life — then crashes unforgivingly to a stop.

See also: “Out of the Woods”

## 5. “Paper Rings”

As peppy as “Mel” but not incalculably smarter, “Paper Rings” retreads the fairy-tale whimsy of Swift’s early work to account for the lived experience of a woman who will turn 30 in December. Grown-ups deserve happy endings too.

See also: “Love Story”

## 4. “Lover”

For a songwriter universally regarded as being preoccupied with falling in (and out of) love, Swift has some beautiful things to say on this album about what it’s like to stay in love. “You’ll save all your dirtiest jokes for me,” she dreams of telling her partner in “Lover’s” warm and waltzy title track. “And at every table, I’ll save you a seat.”

See also: “Enchanted”

## 3. “Cornelia Street”

Of course, commitment can breed complacency. So here she worries from her place of stability what it would feel like if it all fell apart — and does so in language as vivid and specific as any in her songbook. Let’s just say there’s a scene that appears to be set at the entrance to the Holland Tunnel.)

See also: “The Story of Us”

## 2. “Soon You’ll Get Better”

Returning to her old country sound was probably inevitable. And doing it with her fellow Nashville apostates in the Dixie Chicks’ Makes all kinds of sense. But music-business strategy has little to do with the power of this hymn-like ballad, which unsparsingly addresses Swift’s mother’s extended battle with cancer. “Holy orange bottles,” she calls the containers that hold her mom’s pills, just before she admits to praying to a god she’s not sure is real.

See also: “All Too Well”

## 1. “Cruel Summer”

Agony and ecstasy as only Swift at her best can render them: “It’s new, the shape of your body / It’s blue, the feeling I’ve got,” she sings in a razor-sharp, industrial-pop banger about finding love in a hokey place. To make too big a deal of the fact that she co-wrote it with Annie Clark (aka St. Vincent) is to indulge the shallow notion that centrists have no edge. Still, the part of the bridge where Swift shrieks about the devil might be the punkiest thing you’ll hear all year.

See also: “Style”

— Mikael Wood  
Los Angeles Times

## Raphael Saadiq

Jimmy Lee (Columbia Records)

“Jimmy Lee” is a stirring album combining Raphael Saadiq’s trademark vintage soul sounds with moving gospel, disquieting soundscapes and a closing triad of tunes that pulls no punches in addressing social ills and personal doubts.

Saadiq’s family losses to addictions and other tragedies — “an unfortunate string of mishaps would eventually take the lives of three brothers and a sister” — were mentioned already on the lead track of his 2002 solo debut, “Instant Vintage,” but “Jimmy Lee,” named after one of his late siblings, deepens and expands the references and connections in songs and stories about decisions, fates and outcomes.

Opener “Sinners Prayer” details hardships and anxiety with barely a sliver of hope while “So Ready” puts a funky bass line on top of a slick click track amid queries like “Can someone heal my soul?” Despair is everywhere, and even a brief mid-album oasis — “I’m Feeling Love” — seems to come with a poisoned well.

Both the unrelenting “My Walk” and the hypnotic “Glory to the Veins” are heartrending, made even more so by mentions

## Vince Gill

Okie (MCA Nashville)

Musically and politically, Vince Gill straddles the middle of the road on “Okie.” “We’re too far left and too far right,” Gill opines on the song “Black and White.”

The singing centrist from Oklahoma creates a coffee house vibe on his 12-song set, with tempos that are never swift and playing that’s always polite. Gill keeps his Eagles-caliber guitar chops under wraps, and fellow virtuosos Tom Bukovac and Jedd Hughes lend only subtle support. There’s little twang until Paul Franklin’s wonderfully weepy pedal steel on the album closer “A World Without Haggard.” Gill’s approach puts the focus on the songs, and makes that’s wise. While those allergic to sentimentality might want to steer clear, there’s an appealing honesty in the often autobiographical lyrics, and Gill’s melodies and

## Redd Kross

Beyond The Door (Merge Records)

Redd Kross continues to swing its pendulum widely and wildly between punk roots and power pop on “Beyond The Door,” its latest album arriving after seven lean years in terms of new recordings, but rich with live dates and reissues.

Brothers Jeff and Steven McMillan have been in bands together for more than four decades, and the method to their madness/genius has barely changed — plenty of groovy melodies atop loud guitars, abundant pop culture references that could fill their own “Jeopardy” category, high doses of merriment and an unfair flair for being a quarter- or half note out



of Jimmy Lee and another of Saadiq’s deceased brothers.

The striking “Rikers Island” and a follow-up monologue by actor Daniel J. Watts pull no punches in expressing the injustices of the prison system and society at large — “Wake up America, and hurry.” Along with “Rearview,” featuring Kendrick Lamar and reflections like “How can I change the world but can’t change myself,” they form a powerful statement sounding like an update of Marvin Gaye’s “What Going On.”

Raphael Saadiq’s albums, collaborations and productions are typically top tier, but his ability to connect the personal with the universal turns “Jimmy Lee” into a career milestone.

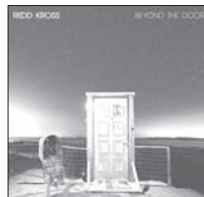
— Pablo Gorondi  
Associated Press



vocals are lovely.

Back-to-back contemporary Christian tunes serve as love songs to his wife, singer Amy Grant, and are the album’s highlights because they’re so beautifully sung. When Gill climbs to a high A on the piano ballad “When My Amy Prays,” the transcendent moment might give even a doubting Thomas goosebumps.

— Steven Wine  
Associated Press



of step with the prevalent trends.

Those elated by Redd Kross’ unexpected 2012 return, “Researching The Blues,” will find that the quality remains high on the timeless “Beyond The Door.”

— Pablo Gorondi  
Associated Press



## WEEKEND: BOOKS

## Bella Thorne shares struggles in poetry book

BY ALICIA RANCILIO  
Associated Press

Bella Thorne says people are confused by her and she doesn't understand why, but maybe her new book will clear things up. "People constantly come to me, directors, producers, people that are in the industry, and they're always like, 'I just really misjudged you. You're just so different, Bella. It's just so crazy. I wish everyone knew the real you.'"

The actress says she's not sure what's so confusing because her life is an open book — so much so that she's written a very personal collection of poetry called "The Life of a Wannabe Mogul: Mental Disarray Vol. 1."

She writes about personal struggles, relationships, sexual abuse, depression and having dyslexia.

"I constantly wonder how I'm so OK because sometimes I get lost in my thoughts of all the darkness that I've kind of been through, and I wonder where I would be if I wasn't me," Thorne said recently.

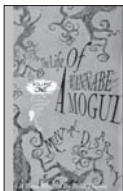
She dates a lot of the poems so read-

ers can chart her personal growth and hearing.

"That's important. You change your mind, you change your opinion, you change your whole entire mindset, and that's OK because you live, you learn, you get older, and you decide differently."

Thorne, 21, was a Disney kid, landing a role alongside Zendaya in 2010 on the Disney Channel series "Shake It Up." Since that wrapped in 2013, she's worked

steadily with roles in movies like "Blended" starring Adam Sandler, "The DUFF" and "Midnight Sun" opposite Patrick Schwarzenegger. Thorne has shed some of the wholesome Disney image, embracing more of a free spirit. She has a nose piercing, recently came out as pansexual and is open about her marijuana use.



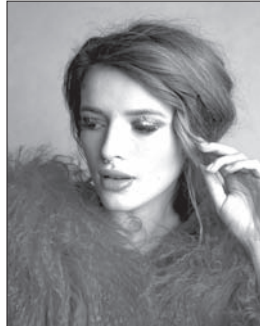
"Seriously, I'm an open book. I'm not acting here. Like, legit, I never wear makeup unless I'm getting paid for it or I'm doing press. I literally show every aspect of me. I refuse to edit anything of myself," Thorne said.

She may not hold back, but she is nervous about how the book will be perceived.

"I feel a little scared wondering what people are going to think," Thorne said. "I know that once it's out and once I hear fans coming to me and sharing their crazy stories that we have so much in common and we really are alike, then I know that I'll feel more proud and I'll feel better."

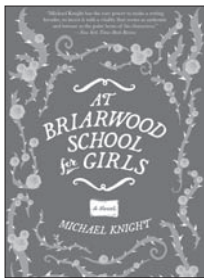
Thorne plans to write a second volume when time allows.

"I've got like two movies coming out, I'm about to film like four movies back-to-back, I have an album coming out with Sony, I want to start working on the second book, I'm writing a TV series I hope to direct, I'm doing a weed brand, and I'm redoing my makeup line (Thorne by Bella), head to toe. I'm always out here hustling," she says, laughing.



TAYLOR JEWELL, INVISION/AP

Actress Bella Thorne has written a collection of poetry called "The Life of a Wannabe Mogul: Mental Disarray Vol. 1."



### 'At Briarwood School for Girls'

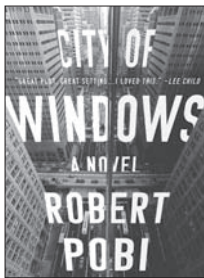
Michael Knight

It's 1994, and Virginia boarding school student Lenore Littlefield is keeping a huge secret: She's pregnant. She also seems to be getting messages from beyond the grave from Elizabeth Archer, a student who hanged herself after her fiancé was killed during World War I.

Meanwhile, Lenore's rebellious buddy Poppo Tuttle wants to fight the Walt Disney Company's real-life plan to build a theme park nearby called Disney's America. Using pep talk straight from the basketball court, Coach Fink leads her new Drama Club charges — including Lenore, who's working off a demerit for busting curfew — in a production of "The Phantom of Thornton Hall," a Pulitzer Prize-winning work by Briarwood alum Eugenia Marsh. History teacher Lucas Bishop finds himself befuddled by the Disney all-girls environment and teams with Coach Fink to track down the now reclusive playwright.

Featuring clever plot twists, the colorful "At Briarwood School for Girls" takes the reader on a memorable ride.

Marci Schmitt  
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



### 'City of Windows'

Robert Pobi

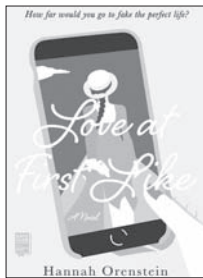
Near Grand Central Station during a blizzard, a car is waiting at a red light when a sniper's bullet takes out the driver. A study of the surrounding area proves futile because there are so many possibilities as to where the shot originated.

The authorities need help, and the agent in charge reluctantly approaches former FBI agent Lucas Page, who retired and became a university professor and best-selling author. When Page worked for the FBI, he was in a tragic accident that almost killed him. He left and rebuilt his life. Now he wants nothing to do with his former profession. His skill set is essential for this case, since he can read a crime scene and see the geometric trajectories in his head, allowing him to quickly trace back to the location of the sniper.

The victims begin to pile up. It appears that this elusive killer is targeting law enforcement. Page will have to outwit a ruthless villain who has no qualms about eliminating any threat.

Pobi has written a compelling and baffling thriller that uses the New York City landscape to invoke fear and terror.

— Jeff Ayers/AP



### 'Love at First Like'

Hannah Orenstein

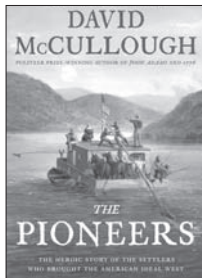
Eliza and her sister Sophie co-own a jewelry shop in Brooklyn. After discovering that her ex-boyfriend is newly engaged, Eliza comforts herself by trying on one of the shop's most extravagant rings on a very important finger. She snaps a photo and saves it to her Instagram account.

The next morning, Eliza is shocked to learn that the photo is posted to her Instagram feed. The feeling of horror slowly morphs into intrigue. It seems that her 100,000 followers have grown by several thousand more overnight. Eliza makes the executive decision to continue the ruse, especially when the shop begins to welcome more patrons than ever before.

When the offers of wedding sponsorships and donated gifts start filling her inbox, Eliza can't help but to fall completely into the charade. She even posts a date. The only way to move forward is to find a future husband.

"Love at First Like" is fun romance with a digital twist. Orenstein proves that even though we present our lives through screens, it's important to live life unfiltered in the real world.

— Lincee Ray/AP



### 'The Pioneers'

David McCullough

McCullough chronicles the settlement of the Northwest Territory in "The Pioneers." Manasseh Cutler, a Massachusetts clergyman, successfully lobbied Congress to include in the Northwest Ordinance three provisions: religious freedom, free universal education and a ban on slavery. Five states would be created out of this territory — Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin — plus northeastern Minnesota. When the slavery ban was challenged in the Ohio legislature, it was Cutler's son, Ephraim, a legislator himself, who cast a key vote shoring up the ban for which his father had laid the foundation.

McCullough's graceful, understated writing style is perfect for "The Pioneers," a slowly unfolding narrative populated with frontiersmen and women going about the laborious job of clearing the land and building a new community — what is now Marietta, Ohio, on the banks of the Ohio River. McCullough tells this story through the diaries and letters of the settlers — meaning that it's told from the white man's point of view.

Dennis J. McGrath  
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)



### 'Wild and Crazy Guys'

Nick De Semlyen

In comedy, timing is everything. That law works against "Wild and Crazy Guys: How the Comedy Mavericks of the '80s Changed Hollywood Forever," a collection of anecdotes starring Bill Murray, Eddie Murphy and Chevy Chase that are as familiar as your dad's jokes around the dinner table.

De Semlyen, the features editor for Empire movie magazine, has a breezy, conversational delivery, but he relies too much on recycled interviews, hyperbole and a shaky memory that butchers a key detail from "Parent-hood."

The book is at its best when it takes you behind the scenes of "Little Shop of Horrors," "Neighbors" and other movies that haven't been dissected to death. Those features may not be as beloved as "Ghostbusters" and "Animal House," but at least the material feels fresh.

Neal Justin  
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

## WEEKEND: TELEVISION &amp; DVD

## NEW ON DVD

**“Godzilla: King of the Monsters”:** This latest big-screen tale of Godzilla features writing that has more holes than a 90-year-old pair of socks, acting that ranges from comedic to sad and a look that is so dark it is like trying to watch the quick-cut editing style of a Michael Bay “Transformers” movie shot using a 15-watt lightbulb.

Granted, this is a monster movie and certain leeway has to be given. That was a lot easier when the “Godzilla” franchise launched in the mid-’50s. The franchise didn’t become popular because it took the world of a giant lizard seriously, but because the projects were so campy. The new “Godzilla” movies are treated so seriously it is as if they are contending for Oscars.

The only good thing is “Godzilla: King of the Monsters” has accomplished the impossible. It makes all the cheesy productions of the ’50s and ’60s look like science fiction masterpieces.



Warner Bros. Pictures

**“Godzilla,” on DVD, is dark and serious.**

**“Rocketman”:** The film uses Elton John’s memorable songs to tell the singer/songwriter’s story. Taron Egerton (“Kingsman: The Secret Service”) handles the task of portraying the larger-than-life entertainer with great ease. He gets support from Jamie Bell as John’s longtime lyricist and writing partner Bernie Taupin, and Bryce Dallas Howard, who plays John’s mother, Sheila Farebrother.

Unlike “Bohemian Rhapsody,” which used recording sessions and concert performances to tell the story of Freddie Mercury and Queen, Elton John’s music is woven into the story with more of a musical theater approach. That sets up some fun scenes, but it tends to cushion the power of the story.

**“The Banana Splits Movie”:** The animal rock-band from Hanna-Barbera’s 1968 “The Banana Splits Adventure Hour” is back. It is surprising that the zany costumed characters who starred in a children’s TV show would be used as the main protagonists in a gruesome horror movie. But it works because there is a natural creepiness and fun that comes with Fleggle, Bingo, Drooper and Snorky. The movie is both nostalgic fun and pleasantly scary.

**“Flash: The Complete Fifth Season”:** Grant Gustin brings just the right amount of seriousness and fun to the comic-book character. His skills are put to the test in Season 5 when Flash’s speedster daughter from the future, Nora (Jessica Parker Kennedy), arrives in Central City.

**“The Secret Life of Pets 2”:** Terrier Max (Patton Oswalt) must deal with major changes after Katie’s marriage and the arrival of a toddler.

**“The Beatles: Made on Merseyside”:** This documentary looks at the Beatles’ launch into stardom.

**“The Last Black Man in San Francisco”:** Two best friends try to find their place in a rapidly changing city.

**“Apocalypse Now Final Cut”:** This is director Francis Ford Coppola’s most realized version of the film, which was nominated for eight Academy Awards.

**“Killers Anonymous”:** Tension grows within a support group for killers as the group faces a mystery. Gary Oldman stars.

— Rick Bentley/Tribune News Service

## Lupita Nyong’o narrates new docuseries that follows the trials and tribulations of animal families

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY  
Associated Press

**L**upita Nyong’o remembers clearly the first time she touched a giraffe. She was 5, and it was part of her childhood education growing up in Kenya to appreciate the wildlife around her.

“They weren’t exotic, they were there,” she recalled.

Over the years, the Oscar-winning actress has been involved in conservation efforts to preserve wildlife, and has spent time touring the national parks of her homeland where she got to marvel at the beauty of animals up close. So when she was recruited by Simon Fuller to narrate the new Discovery docuseries “Serengeti,” which follows the trials and tribulations of animal families including lions, baboons, hyenas and elephants, it was an easy yes.

But it also attracted her for another reason. “I’ve never heard anyone like me narrate these documentaries,” she said, speaking of her African heritage, in a recent interview with The Associated Press. “I was really excited for the opportunity to narrate my own world.”

In “Serengeti,” which debuts Tuesday on AFN-Spectrum, Nyong’o’s voice takes viewers on a journey following several species that were tracked in the massive Serengeti in Tanzania. Filmmaker John Downer, a veteran wildlife documenter, was tasked with zeroing in on the familial dynamics of various species, like Kalila the lioness, who is ousted from her pride in the first episode because she’s mated outside of it. She’s now forced to protect and feed her young cubs without the help of her family.

Bakari, a baboon, is seen fighting for the affection of a female baboon who has given her affections to the ruler of the pack. Meanwhile Tembo, an adolescent elephant, is trying to find his way and place after his mother gives birth again.

Downer said “Serengeti” differs from other nature programs because it brings the viewer into the world of the animals in a more intimate way.

“We’re not seeing them just sort of as you would within the documentary, which is usually about what they do in dramatic moments where you see something happen in their lives. This is kind of more personal. It relates to human behavior,” he said.

“We could see ourselves reflected in them, because we see them as animals as complex in many ways as we are, and having to make the same life choices but in very different environments, where it’s all about survival of



Nyong’o



## Getting personal on the Serengeti

the family and about jealousies and rivalries and many things that, you know, the human world encounters.”

The series is produced by “American Idol” producer Simon Fuller, who was inspired by his own experiences watching wildlife on safari and his own time spent in the Serengeti. They were able to film on the Serengeti Reserve, a private area next to the national park, away from tourists, which helped them gain unfettered access to the animals.

Thousands of hours of animal interactions were filmed over two years and then whittled down to six hours.

“The big thing was spending time with the animals and letting them inform the story, so we were always feeding off what happened, when changing the story line as it happened,” Downer said. “We have to start identifying stories early; we have to abandon story lines if they weren’t going to work.”

Drones were used to keep track of the animals when regular cameras lost sight of them. Fuller said a drone camera was used to capture a devastating moment when one animal was killed by a snake.

While there were uplifting moments, there also were tragedies on the Serengeti that may bring tears to the eyes, as it did for one veteran crew member, who witnessed the death of a young

member of a clan and wished he could have been able to intervene.

“(He) said, ‘We couldn’t because we didn’t want to interfere with nature or that scene.’ And he was sobbing,” Fuller remembered. “That’s the difference in this show. That’s the difference.”

One of the animals that stole Nyong’o’s heart in the series is Bakari the baboon, who ends up caring for a baby among the clan when calamity strikes.

“It’s kind of the springboard for his entire arc in the series, but what I love about Bakari is the learning curve he goes on,” she said. “It’s really, really, really touching to witness his journey. That’s my favorite.”

She also learned more about hyenas, an animal she has long feared.

“It’s not that I’m no longer afraid of hyenas, but I appreciate what they do,” she said.

The series has already aired in the United Kingdom; there, it was narrated by John Boyega, who was born in Britain to Nigerian parents. Nyong’o says she traded notes with her friend and Star Wars costar about the project.

“We were both excited because we got to be the voice that we heard so often, that European voice that we heard so often talking about our continent,” she said.

Among the animals followed for “Serengeti” are (clockwise from upper left) lionesses resting in an acacia tree, a leopard and wild dog pups. The first episode of the six-part docuseries airs Tuesday on AFN-Spectrum.

Discovery

## WEEKEND: HEALTH &amp; FITNESS



By HELEN CAREFOOT  
The Washington Post

Our cellphones and laptops go everywhere with us — on the subway, to the grocery store, to work, even to the bathroom. Because touching shared surfaces is a surefire way to encounter a variety of microbes, how worried should you be about getting sick from your phone or laptop?

No more worried than you would be about getting sick from touching your other personal objects, says Jonathan Eisen, a microbiologist and professor at the University of California at Davis. An object such as a subway handrail or computer keyboard can harbor microbes including pathogens — infectious organisms that cause disease — but those pathogens can make you sick only in the right environment and with the right transmission method.

If you're the only person using your laptop and phone, and you use them in a normal, everyday environment such as your house or workplace, and you wash your hands and clean your devices regularly, you probably don't need to be concerned; you're basically sharing microbes with yourself, he says.

The risk increases when you're actively transferring harmful microbes into your body or coming into contact with other people. For example, if you're using a recipe on your computer and going back and forth between your keyboard and handling raw meat. In this case, you could be transferring a harmful microbe, such as *E. coli* or salmonella, onto the keyboard. In that case, it's a good idea to wipe your keyboard down and wash your hands.

If someone sneezes on your phone and you touch it and then your mouth, you could get sick, but only because you touched your mouth. Using a keyboard in a public library or scrolling through your phone on the subway with the same hand you used to touch the railing would be riskier, because you're exposing yourself to other people's microbes, Eisen says. If you're using your phone in a subway car, "it's going to pick up a few microbes from the environment." Somebody on the car might be sick, and

"you don't really necessarily want to sample all the microbes from everybody who has been in that subway car."

But haven't we been told that our phones are dirtier than a toilet seat? Maybe, but many studies that measure the presence of microbes on our devices ("swab tests") fail to provide context for consumers, Eisen said. "Maybe it tells you something about how recently something was cleaned or how much food there is for the microbes in that particular environment, but it doesn't tell you anything about the health risk."

Both helpful and harmful microbes exist everywhere, and trying to eliminate all microbes from an environment isn't possible; you'd have to live in a bubble, he said. "This is not about eliminating risk, it's about reducing risk," Eisen added.

It's more useful to consider the environment you're in and how the microbes are transmitted. "Many nasty microbes, even though you can find them in the environment, just won't be transmitted and cause disease just by their mere presence on an object such as your keyboard."

There hasn't been a lot of research into disease transmission from personal devices, but a recent study found no evidence that keyboards transmit disease, even in places that harbor lots of nasty microbes, such as hospitals. A 2019 paper that examined contamination on keyboards in healthcare settings found that the majority of devices contained many microbes, including some pathogens, but researchers couldn't find

evidence of an impact on patients and workers.

Instead of trying to eliminate all the microbes on your device with harsh cleaning agents, Eisen recommends using

common sense to consider transmission methods — think about how many hands touch the handrail on a Metro escalator — and washing your hands often to avoid getting sick.

"Washing your hands is so effective because generally it's your hands that are bringing things into your body," he says. You don't need to sanitize your phone with a UV light, but he recommends wiping it down often with water or a device-cleaning wipe. If you can't get to a sink to wash your hands, use hand sanitizer.

Brian Sansoni of the American Cleaning Institute suggests using a microfiber cloth to give your phone a gentle wipe-down when you notice smears and smudges.

## GOING VIRAL

Your phone and laptop probably won't make you sick (but you should still clean them)



iStock photos

**When using electronic devices, hand washing and covering your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing are highly recommended to help reduce transmission of harmful microbes.**

Premoistened device-cleaning cloths can also be used, and disinfecting wipes can be used to clean cases.

Melissa Maker, founder of boutique cleaning firm Clean My Space in Toronto, wipes her tablet with a microfiber cloth about three times a week. She says the cleaning is more for device maintenance than killing bacteria.

Apple and Microsoft suggest powering off and unplugging devices before cleaning them, especially when using liquids. Liquid damage could void your device's warranty, Maker says, so never spray anything directly onto the device and keep cleaning agents away from openings where liquid could seep in, such as charger or USB ports. Never use harsh cleaning agents such as bleach or ammonia — and definitely don't use a window-cleaning product such as Windex, Maker says.

To clean screens, touch pads and exteriors, move a flat-weave microfiber cloth in an S pattern, starting from the top corner and zigzagging down to the bottom of the screen to avoid streaks and to cover larger areas, Maker says. A dry cloth should be enough to get rid of most fingerprints and smudges. You can moisten the cloth with a little water or a mix of water and mild soap. Put your index finger in the cloth and buff spots away using a circular motion. A small amount of isopropyl alcohol lifts away stubborn stains, such as adhesive residue or coffee spots.

To clean keyboards, gently wipe the keyboard with the cloth. Use compressed air and a soft-bristle toothbrush or cotton swab to free large particles such as dust or crumbs from between the keys. You can also go over each key with some isopropyl alcohol on a swab.



## WEEKEND: FAMILY

## Fashioning ways to fit in

## School uniforms changing late-summer shopping

By ABHA BHATTARAI  
The Washington Post

It's back-to-school season and, for Aryana Duplessis, that means stocking up on school uniforms — for her 1-year-old. Her daughter, Dallas, has been wearing the mandated red shirt and blue bottoms to her New Orleans day care since she was 2 months old. On weekends, the toddler likes to wear colorful rompers and dresses. But during the week, it's all business.

"I think it's awesome," said Duplessis, 38, an insurance agent. "She walks into day care and has an immediate sense of community. She belongs."

Public schools, charters and child care centers nationwide are increasingly requiring uniforms, re-making back-to-school shopping traditions that have long emphasized individuality and self expression. More than 40 percent of the nation's public schools and preschools now use uniforms, government data show, prompting mainstream retailers to rethink how they stock and market school gear.

Walmart, Target and Amazon are selling their own brands of polo shirts, pleated skirts and khakis for children as young as 2, while Old Navy has created "uniform hubs" in all 1,100 U.S. stores. Carter's, Kohl's and H&M also are trying to break into a \$1 billion-a-year market long been dominated by a handful of specialty brands.

"Every retailer is adapting to the growth of uniforms," said Matthew Buesing, vice president of customer and digital marketing at Frontier Toast, which sells directly to thousands of schools, as well as to stores like Target, Costco and Macy's. "We've reached a middle ground where all types of schools — private, public, preschools — are using uniforms."

School administrators say uniforms are as much about safety and convenience as they are about inclusion. Students feel like they're part of a team, parents save money, and teachers don't have to worry about losing sight of them at the playground or on a field trip.

"It helps them learn because they just don't care about what anybody is wearing — they're all in red and blue," said Renatta Thomas, a teacher at Open Minds Open Hearts

**'It used to be we'd go to the mall and buy 10 outfits for school. Now the focus is on finding the perfect backpack and tennis shoes.'**

**Sarah Blevins**  
Mother whose sons will wear uniforms for the first time this school year

say, "We are all here for the same reason," said Robyn Silverman, a child and teen development specialist. "There is a very good argument for why we need uniforms in today's world."

But critics say uniforms stifle creativity and individualism. "It reflects our culture's obsession on turning school, even preschool, into work," said Michael Solomon, a fashion psychologist and marketing professor at Saint Joseph's University in Philadelphia. "When you put kids in a uniform, you're saying, 'Follow the rules. Don't color outside the lines.'"

For retailers, uniforms represent a growing source of revenue. The

lead-up to the school year is the second-largest shopping event of the year, behind the holiday season.

"We've started to see an uptick in uniform searches as early as June," said Andres Dorransoro, Old Navy's senior vice president of merchandising. "It's a super important time of year, and demand is rising."

Old Navy this year is selling uniforms in more than 200 sizes, from 2T for toddlers to adult XL. Its newest styles include moisture-wicking polos and stain-resistant pants with reinforced knees. Also increasingly important accessories like hairbands, novelty socks and backpacks that help express "the energy of youth," Dorransoro said.

In all, Americans are projected to spend \$26.2 billion this back-to-school season, down 5 percent from last year's \$27.5 billion, according to the National Retail Federation. Families with school-age children are expected to spend \$697, with the largest chunk — \$240 — going toward clothing and accessories.

This year's uniform offerings include stretchier fabrics, slimmer cuts and built-in sun protection.

Lands' End's newest "rapid-dry" polo shirts are made with antimicrobial fabric, while Amazon's line of "soft but tough" children's uniforms comes with elastic waistbands and reinforced knees.

Parents say they're changing how they shop for the school year, too. There are fewer late-summer buying sprees for everyday clothes. Instead, they're buying mandated polos and pants in bulk and splurging on accessories like sneakers and backpacks.

"It used to be we'd go to the mall and buy 10 outfits for school," said Sarah Blevins, whose 8- and 10-year-olds will wear uniforms for the first time this year to their public school in Dothan, Ala. "Now the focus is on finding the perfect backpack and tennis shoes."

## THE MEAT AND POTATOES OF LIFE

Lisa Smith Molinari



## Some names are nicer than others

Why do we name our babies before they are born? Before we know their character traits, individual personalities, propensities and proficiencies?

Prior to marrying a man with a surname prone to misspellings and mispronunciations — Malarney, Mulineri, Marinara and Manicotti — my legal name was Lisa Smith. I never particularly identified with the name. It seemed common, fleetingly trendy, too milquetoast for my unique persona. Lisa was the most popular baby name in 1966, the year of my birth, and according to census data, Smith has long been the most common surname in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. If that weren't enough to make me feel utterly ordinary, during college I had to be identified by my social security number because there was another Lisa Smith in my class.

The lack of panache in my birth name made me particularly susceptible to nicknames. My own mother, the person who picked my name in the first place, called me Dee Dee Dumpling during my early childhood. I never knew why, but perhaps she felt it was a better fit than my legal name. Even though the cutesy alliteration smacked of fat-shaming, I had to admit, it described me to a T.

My brother's motivation for nicknaming me was less to describe than to humiliate. His standard was "Pig," but when my parents, who could no longer stand my incessant whining, forbade the insult, he cleverly reversed it to "Gip" and the whining continued. When the boy across the street and I were about seven, my brother found out that we were taking our shirts off and touching our bellies together. My brother seized the opportunity to assign me a "stripper" name — Bubbs MacGraw — and blackmailed me for years with the threat of telling our parents about my secret belly-touching rendezvous.

After a family trip to Hawaii, my brother called me Lee Lae Lon, which sounded pleasant enough until he taught our entire bus to chant it on the way to school. His other epithets included Chunky Dinners, Chung King, Skunk, and Skunkgrass, all demeaning by design.

In middle school, I met another Lisa, and our friends referred to us as "La One" and "La Two." Of course, I was La Two, which played right into my inferiority complex. In high school, my best friend Patti Frankovich and I dreamed of life outside of our Western Pennsylvania working class town, so we made up names that might imply affluent pedigrees. When we met boys while skiing or at the beach, Patti became Claire Taylor, and I, Brooke Townsend — just two Connecticut prep school girls on vacation. My discount department store wardrobe was probably a dead giveaway, but we enjoyed those moments of false refinement nonetheless.

During my first job out of law school, I was assigned to an engineering malpractice case involving a Pittsburgh sewage treatment facility. As the junior attorney, I had to attend depositions and document searches, which were done on site at the plant. Anyone driving near one of these facilities knows the foul stench of raw sewage that I was subjected to on a regular basis. It permeated my dry-clean-only suits, hair, briefcase and car. After a month or so of arriving back at the law firm feeling like I needed to be bathed in acid or set on fire, my colleagues gave me the unfortunate moniker Sister Shud.

A few years and many showers later, I met Francis, my future husband. He called me Sunflower while we were in that lovey-dovey stage when schmaltz knows no bounds. But after the reality of marriage, parenting and military life took hold, we were both too embarrassed to acknowledge the corny pet name from our initial courtship, preferring to go with the boring but conveniently monosyllabic, Hon.

However, there is one name in my checkered history that has always been a perfect fit. It's shared by more than two billion people, but somehow makes me feel special. I'm proud that three people in this world will forever call me "Mom."

Read more of Lisa Smith Molinari's columns at:  
theameatandpotatoesoflife.com  
Email: meatandpotatoesoflife@googlemail.com



School uniform requirement is on the rise.

istock

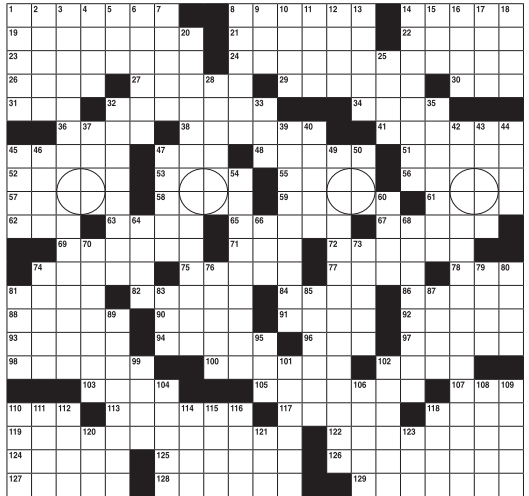
# WEEKEND: CROSSWORD AND COMICS

## NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

### REVOLUTIONARY BY DAVID STEINBERG / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

David Steinberg sold his first crossword to The Times in 2011, when he was 14 and just finishing the eighth grade. A prolific contributor since then, he has had 94 crosswords in the paper altogether. A 2019 graduate of Stanford University, studying psychology and computer science, David recently moved to Kansas City, Mo., to edit crosswords for Andrews McMeel Universal syndicate. —W.S.

- ACROSS**  
1 Passes along, as a present  
8 What 13-Down means in poker  
14 Book in a mosque  
19 Antarctic mass  
21 Major British tabloid  
22 Yogurt-container words  
23 Celebratory Native American feast  
24 Drives around awhile ... as suggested by this puzzle's visual elements?  
26 It's counterpart, in programming  
27 "S.N.L." alum Cheri  
29 Military-alert system  
30 Sow's home  
31 Small criticism  
32 Baa-dly needing a haircut?  
34 "Today" co-host Hoda  
36 Challenges for infidels  
38 "De-ee-eh-lux!"  
41 Cherry brandy  
45 Certain rishares  
47 Deposit box?  
48 Morning box?  
51 Many a Stan Lee film role  
52 Capital NE of Casablanca
- 53 Idris of "The Dark Tower"  
55 Ones or tens place  
56 0 0 0  
57 Wafer brand  
58 Hockey-shot sound  
59 Shots in the dark  
61 Beginning of the Joint Army/Navy Phonetic Alphabet  
62 Camera type, for short  
63 Very funny person  
65 Extremely cold  
67 River through Pakistan  
69 Sea creatures that may employ camouflage when hunting  
71 Blood-type system  
72 Ones generating buzz in the music world?  
74 Play at full volume  
75 Super \_\_\_\_ (game series)  
77 Help with a job  
78 Wrath  
81 Eco-friendly car introduced in 2011  
82 Something the nose knows  
84 \_\_\_\_ Pictures  
86 First name on the Supreme Court  
88 Quits a program  
90 Dennis the Menace, e.g.  
91 Burnt barbecue bits  
92 Shooting stars, some think  
93 Kind of salami  
94 Pool components  
96 Type units  
97 Like going all in, maybe  
98 Diamond pattern  
100 Slowly, musically  
102 Some are liberal  
103 Meyers of late-night  
105 Producer of brown eggs  
107 Black \_\_\_\_  
110 Arborist's tool  
113 Laid, as a claim  
117 "Spider-Man" director  
118 Hit hard  
119 1965 No. 1 Byrds hit ... as suggested by this puzzle's visual elements?  
122 Australia's smallest state  
124 Update New York city  
125 Topic of Article I, Section 3 of the Constitution  
126 Up-and-coming  
127 Wrinkle treatment  
128 Shaman, for one  
129 Newspaper sections that often fall out
- 6 Mountains just south of Yellowstone  
7 The Quakers and others  
8 Celebrity socialite  
9 Comedian Margaret 10 Mind  
11 "\_\_\_\_ quam videri," state motto of North Carolina  
12 Strike on the head  
13 See 8-Across  
14 Home of the Marine Corps University  
15 \_\_\_\_ Constitution  
16 Individual curls, say  
17 Slightly  
18 It contains M.S.G.: Abbr.  
20 1973 play featuring a sign with a burned-out "E"  
25 Part of a king's guard  
28 It charges to do some cleaning  
32 Arrogant newcomers  
33 Rebellion leader  
35 Swager  
37 Freud's first stage  
39 Plays hard after working hard  
40 Baker with the 1986 hit "Sweet Love"  
42 Baker or dye cleaner, maybe  
43 They multiply by dividing  
44 Garden item that sounds like the plural of another garden item  
45 Dispensers at banquets  
46 Help (out)  
47 Author of "The Lion, the Bear and the Fox"  
49 Full of empty talk  
50 Royals' org.  
54 Teleported, in the Harry Potter books  
60 Drop-down menu in online shopping  
64 I as in Icarus  
66 Something you might take a bow for in the theater?  
68 Unapologetic  
70 Squeaky mice, e.g.  
73 Chasm  
74 Jabber?  
76 Whirlpool subsidiary since 2006  
79 Place to lace up  
80 "It's a snap!"  
81 Summer Triangle star  
83 The Notorious \_\_\_\_  
85 Six Nations tribe  
87 Leave off, as the last word of a  
89 Line just above a total, say  
95 Squid's ink holder  
99 Latin reek  
101 Accumulate  
102 Up  
104 Like a zero-star review  
106 Savory taste  
108 Coat that's hard to take off  
109 Sports page fodder  
110 Paycheck go-with  
111A plane might be flown on it  
112 Judicial order  
114 Pad site  
115 \_\_\_\_ Rosso (Sicilian wine)  
116 Kind of citizenship  
118 Kind of tea  
120 Cpl. or sgt.  
121 Fwy., e.g.  
123 Virginia Woolf's "\_\_\_\_ Dalloway"

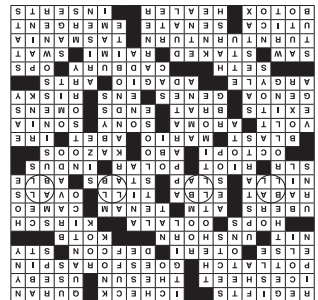


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## FACES

# A clear mandate

'Dark Crystal' prequel director knew he had a lot to live up to when revisiting Jim Henson puppet world for Netflix

By MARK KENNEDY  
Associated Press

Louis Leterrier knew he'd immediately face scrutiny from superfans of "The Dark Crystal" when he became director of its prequel. After all, he's a superfan, too.

The French director calls Jim Henson's groundbreaking 1982 fantasy puppet feature "a jewel of creation" and says it's the main reason he became a filmmaker. He knew messing with its legacy was a dicey proposition.

"The keepers of that jewel are really hardcore about it. They really are ultra-protective and fearful. I've known that for a while. I've known that because I was one of them," he said.

Fans will get a look at what Leterrier has achieved with "The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance," a 10-episode prequel that debuted Friday on Netflix. They'll find something remarkably respectful and vast — 83 puppeteers and 70 different creature species.

"I tell people it's the biggest puppet production in history," said Lisa Henson, daughter of the creator and chief executive of his entertainment company. "The scale of it is very awesome."

The 1982 film, which Jim Henson co-directed with Frank Oz, was the first big live-action film to feature no human actors. While not a runaway success, the film has achieved cult status, riffed about on "South Park" and its music was sampled by the Crystal Method.

The new series is set on the same planet of Thra many years before the events of the movie, but has familiar characters — the kind, elf-like Gelflings and the evil dinosaur-buzzard Skeksis. As in the original, it is often the wonderfully realized minor creatures, insects and plants that really wow. Leterrier's camera swirls and soars over this dynamic planet.

The new filmmakers were faithful to Henson's sense of handcrafted art, using computers only when necessary — flying or swimming — or to enhance the characters, with, say, tongues that wrap around food. Some technology tricks — 3D printers, animatronics or filming scenes and then going back to cut out the puppeteers — were employed but no giant leaps from Henson's legacy were made. If the Skeksis in the original film required 36 puppeteers, the same is the case for the series. Foam latex skin was also used for both projects.

Actor Taron Egerton jumped at the chance to join the new series, voicing a Gelfling named Rian. Egerton saw the 1982 film with his father and found it enchanting.

"It was otherworldly and completely different to anything I had seen at that age. And it's still completely different to anything



Netflix photos

"The Dark Crystal: Age of Resistance" revisits characters from Jim Henson's 1982 film, including the Gelflings, left, and the Skeksis, right. The 10-episode prequel is on Netflix.

I've seen. I think that's the wonderful thing about 'The Dark Crystal.' It is totally its own thing," he said.

Netflix has taken some risk resurrecting such a beloved title. The main writers — Jeffrey Addiss and Will Matthews — had never done TV or undertaken anything so sprawling, while Leterrier, whose big-screen credits include action movies like "The Transporter" and "The Incredible Hulk," had no experience in TV or with puppets.

But he had passion, discussing various techniques and plot ideas with Henson's heirs. "Here's a Frenchman pouring his heart out and telling them how important Jim Henson is and 'The Dark Crystal' was to me," he said.

After he accepted the job, he admitted he freaked out. "I realized, 'What did you do, Louis? You're such an idiot! You're going to ruin it! You don't know. You've just done action movies and karate movies. You cannot do this thing. Why, why, why?' he recalled thinking. Then he joked: 'I guess they were impressed by the accent.'"

Leterrier and Henson's children didn't initially decide on a prequel. They first thrashed around for a way to create a sequel. But they couldn't seem to get beyond the 1982 film's ending — the grand unification of the Skeksis and Mystics and the healing of the crystal. Leterrier calls it "an enormous exclamation point — one of the biggest in movie history." So instead of building a sequel, they teased out the mythology of the first film along with input from the original filmmakers. They came up with a sweeping story that deals with environmental degradation and tyranny.

"These were the things that 37 years ago Jim Henson was worried about and was talking about. Now more than ever, it's in the forefront of the news," said Leterrier. "I guess that's also why this movie stayed close to my heart — the stakes felt real."

Netflix bankrolled a test to see how the series would look, and that six-month process of building sets and characters became a puppet school for Leterrier. "I mean, it's not like I'm casting Brad Pitt. I have to create Brad Pitt," he said, laughing. Leterrier also visited some original "Dark Crystal" puppets at the Center for Puppetry Arts in Atlanta to see how they moved — piano wire over wooden skeletons. This time, the puppets are lighter but the workload was bigger. To fill 10 hours, the series features 75 sets and 170 puppets, some of which took eight months to build. There's even a puppet show within the puppet show.

The new and the old "Dark Crystal" projects actually share DNA. Brian Froud, the conceptual artist for the 1982 film and his puppet-builder wife, Wendy, both worked on the new series. Their son, Toby, is the design supervisor. (He also was the baby abducted by David Bowie in Henson's "Labyrinth.")

Lisa Henson said the creators tried to keep two different audiences happy.

"Both the people who loved 'The Dark Crystal' and for whom it is a very special memory and those who've never heard of 'The Dark Crystal' and couldn't imagine that they would watch 10 hours of puppets on television," she said, adding, "We went back and forth between those two mind-sets to think about those audiences while we were making the show."

## Sheeran announces break from touring

After more than two years on the road, rocker Ed Sheeran will be taking some time off, he announced at the final show of his "Divide" tour.

"I was told before I came on that now at the end of this tour, I've played to 9 million people around the world. It is the biggest tour ever," Sheeran said Monday night, according to the Sun.

"It's been an emotional day for a lot of people backstage. It kind of feels like, in a weird way, that you're breaking up with a girlfriend that you've been with for years."

Sheeran has been on the road since March 2017. The singer-songwriter said the show in Ipswich, England, was his last gig "for probably 18 months."

Sheeran privately married childhood sweetheart Cherry Seaborn in December but has barely spent time with her since then. He has spoken recently about wanting a more normal life.

"The Shape of You" singer told Charlamagne Tha God in July that he was thinking about crafting a touring life where he could have kids and be around to raise them, going on the road for only a month or so at a time.

The pop singer-songwriter also said Monday that it might be his last loop-pedal tour, according to the Sun. Sheeran typically has played solo on stage using only his guitar and a loop-pedal box, which allows him to record his guitar as he plays and then loop the sounds to back himself up.

The means by which he backed on stage again, it could be with a backing band.

## Viewership down, social media up for VMAs

ITaylor Swift, Missy Elliott and a 1990s rap reunion couldn't halt the shrinkage of MTV's television audience for its Video Music Awards, perhaps nothing can.

The show was seen by 4.9 million viewers live on Monday across 12 Viacom-owned networks, the Nielsen company said. That's down from last year's audience of 5.2 million, as the annual event has slid in television viewers each year since reaching 10.3 million in 2014.

MTV considers that more a reflection of changing media habits among young people than declining interest in its marquee show.

In the weeks leading up the show, social media engagements — liking, sharing or commenting upon announcements about the event — more than doubled over last year. No TV program this summer triggered more social media activity, the network said.

## Other news

■ Donnie Fritts, a Muscle Shoals songwriter, actor and actor who was a frequent collaborator with Kris Kristofferson and wrote the song "We Had It All," recorded by numerous artists including Waylon Jennings and Ray Charles, died Tuesday. He was 76.

From wire services



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## OPINION

## Pence not likely to get benched in 2020

By CARL P. LEUBSDORF  
The Dallas Morning News

It's 15 months until the next presidential election — time for a round of rumors about the president dumping his running mate.

They arise about this time every four years, though it's been more than four decades since a vice president was dumped. And in that case, neither the president, Gerald Ford, nor the vice president, Nelson Rockefeller, had been elected, the result of the back-to-back scandal-driven resignations of Vice President Spiro Agnew and President Richard Nixon.

Former U.N. Ambassador and South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley launched the latest version of this perennial political parlor game by tweeting, "Enough of the false rumors. Vice President Pence has been a dear friend of mine for years. He has been a loyal and trustworthy VP to the President. He has my complete support."

What rumors she was referencing remains something of a mystery.

Besides, Trump had just reiterated his support for Pence, as The New York Times' Maggie Haberman quickly noted. She tweeted she asked the president the previous Sunday if he is thinking of replacing Pence. "No, I'm very happy with Mike Pence," he replied, dismissing discussions about making a change as "standard."

Trump isn't far from the truth, though changing running mates often seems discussed more by the political community than by the principals themselves. And it's almost always dismissed as a bad idea.

After all, a presidential nominee's first significant act is picking his running mate. Ditching one four years later would be an admission of error, which is why it rarely

happens.

In addition, most analysts have concluded that vice presidential candidates neither help much in an election nor cause much damage. The only exception might be a small boost in the VP nominee's home state. For example, it's widely believed that John F. Kennedy wouldn't have carried Texas in 1960 without Lyndon B. Johnson as his running mate. Of course, Kennedy would still have won the election.

Before Kennedy was assassinated three years later, rumors of replacing Johnson had risen again, in part thanks to the antagonism between him and the president's brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. But few believe the Kennedys would have broken up a winning team.

One of the most serious efforts to switch running mates came in 1992, when President George H.W. Bush was facing a difficult reelection fight. Some top advisers including his son, future President George W. Bush, reportedly thought he could boost his prospects by replacing Vice President Dan Quayle with Al Gore.

But such a change might have angered GOP conservatives, who backed Quayle more strongly than Bush. And Bush, always loyal to associates, said for three years he would run again with Quayle and characteristically kept his word.

The last time a president ditched an elected vice president was during Franklin D. Roosevelt's four-term presidency in the 1940s. He did it twice.

Roosevelt's original vice president, John Nance Garner, was chosen in a 1932 convention that enabled Roosevelt to win the presidency in 1932. The two were never close, and when Roosevelt decided to seek a third term, Garner unsuccessfully challenged him, eliminating

himself from the ticket.

Roosevelt chose a liberal favorite, Agriculture Secretary Henry Wallace. But four years later, party leaders deemed him too liberal, and Roosevelt chose Harry Truman, who had come to prominence leading a Senate committee investigating defense profits during World War II.

Ever since, presidents have publicly declared their loyalty to their running mates, even when considering a change. One exception was when President Dwight D. Eisenhower suggested that Nixon, his vice president, might have a better chance of succeeding him if he moved to a major Cabinet position, like secretary of defense, in a second Eisenhower term. Nixon decided it would be better to stay put.

There are no signs that Trump plans to replace Pence, whose support among religious conservatives was a major 2016 GOP asset. But now that Trump has named two conservative Supreme Court justices and made other policy changes religious conservatives favor, he might not be as important.

The real crunch may come if the Democrats, who hold the first 2020 convention, put a woman on their ticket, which is likely. That might prompt Trump to reconsider replacing Pence with Haley, or another prominent conservative woman.

Given Trump's questionable reelection prospects, Haley's tweet may have been designed to help her stay off the ticket and not damage her post-Trump presidential prospects. The last losing vice presidential nominee to be elected president was FDR, the vice presidential nominee in 1920. So the historical odds the GOP is likely to nominate the Trump-Pence ticket.

Carl P. Leubsdorf is a former Washington bureau chief of The Dallas Morning News.

Trump's candor delights supporters, worries critics

By ANDREW MALCOLM  
McClatchy Washington Bureau

The British comedian Eddie Izzard has a slight edge but where, nothing, he announces to the audiences some outrageous plan. Pause. Then, he shakes his head. Audience giggles. Pause. He nods again. Audience laughs. Shakes his head. Louder laughter. He nods once more. Guffaws.

President Donald Trump wasn't going for laughs in recent days. So, his remarks and behavior, jumping from one announced policy decision to another, from one seemingly outrageous plan to abandoning it, generated laughter but also serious concerns among many.

It's a measure of the confusing and tiring turmoil across the U.S. politics and beyond that such actions simultaneously ignite professed worries about Trump's mental state among his overzealous critics and admiration among determined supporters for his unpredictability and establishment-rattling candor.

At a time when signs of possible recession, Trump is laser-focused on public perceptions of the economy. With good reason, considering the losing reelection campaigns of Jimmy Carter and George H.W. Bush over challenging economies.

On the surface, absent context, Trump's latest brainstrom sounds like a pretty good idea. One of those news stories that's too good to check out because it will fall apart. Media pounced anyway. Out of the blue, an unpopular president talks about buying Greenland, the world's largest island, a semi-autonomous Danish territory larger than Alaska with only 56,000 residents that's 82% covered in ice. He nuts! As it happens, Trump was going to visit

Denmark next month. So, reporters asked if the purchase was on the agenda. Maybe, the president said, but the topic was not the most important item. Naturally, Danish reporters then asked their prime minister, who said bluntly Greenland wasn't for sale. Trump took offense, canceling the visit.

Here's how we get into these useless contretemps, which are a toxic mix of arrogance and hate. I suspect such episodes will play an invisible but influential role one way or the other in voters' minds next time the president faces his pollsters. The criticism. Aides worried he was competing to shoot it down or qualify his thoughts.

His communications people would have prepared a media background sheet. This would have highlighted President Harry Truman's 1947 postwar offer to buy Greenland for strategic North Atlantic reasons, as well as the fact that the last foreign territory the United States did purchase was the Virgin Islands in 1917 — from Denmark.

That transaction was driven by growing strategic concerns in Washington over Germany's developing interest in those vulnerable nearby Caribbean islands during World War I.

Trump also would have explicitly detailed China's disturbing modern-day interest in building airfield infrastructure on the island of Greenland, atop North Atlantic shipping lanes and only 2,000 miles from the northeastern United States.

But as you may have noticed these past 32 months, such a list is not Trump's public style. In fact, much of what he says or

tweets in public often seems to be mere thinking out loud.

Fans like that. It gives Trump an aura of candor, openness and accessibility, not the carefully calculated theatrics of recent presidents, especially Clinton and Obama.

Days later, Trump, in fact, had a pleasant phone conversation with Denmark's prime minister. But that doesn't fit a narrative of conflict, so you didn't see much coverage.

On Aug. 1, for instance, Trump announced he was placing new tariffs on Chinese imports. On Aug. 13, he declared most of them, professing concern for holiday shopping. On Aug. 23, he slapped on tariffs in retaliation for new Chinese trade levies.

On Aug. 20, Trump allowed that he was considering a payroll tax cut. Key word "considering." Next day he said no, adding, "I'm not going to do that. I'm not doing it. Sorry." This was generally portrayed not as having firmly decided no, but as having changed his mind again.

Trump's style can also cause lasting damage. He's been talking since 2015 about extricating the U.S. military from so many overseas conflicts. He has even said that the successful destruction of Islamic State's territorial caliphate and with no staff consultation, Trump tweeted that he was pulling all 2,000 U.S. troops out of Syria.

That was big news, very big. That preliminary announcement and lack of commitment struck a cord with most Trump's most valuable Cabinet member, retired Gen. Jim Mattis.

Guess what? While some U.S. troops have left Syria, others have entered. So, numbers are vague, and plans for that total troop withdrawal are on indefinite hold. You probably won't see that in a tweet.

Andrew Malcolm is an author and veteran correspondent covering politics since the 1960s.

## OPINION

## What newspapers are saying at home

The following editorial excerpts are selected from a cross section of newspapers throughout the United States. The editorials are provided by The Associated Press and other stateside syndicates.

## Israel's escalation of tensions related to Iran puts GIs at risk

## The Washington Post

A French attempt to jump-start talks between the United States and Iran got plenty of attention over the weekend at the Group of 7 summit, but it might have been less serious than it seemed. Though President Donald Trump agreed with French President Emmanuel Macron that a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani could happen within weeks, Iran's foreign minister dismissed the prospect on Tuesday as "unimaginable." Meanwhile, the hype over a possible diplomatic breakthrough obscured a much more ominous development: another escalation in Iran-related tensions across the Middle East, this time driven by Israel.

Since July, Israel has quietly expanded its air campaign against Iranian assets and allied militias from Syria to Iraq, with potentially far-reaching consequences for U.S. forces in the region. U.S. officials have said a July 19 airstrike on a weapons depot north of Baghdad was carried out by Israel, which has launched hundreds of strikes in Syria in recent years but had not targeted Iraq since 1981. Three other recent attacks on arms storehouses controlled by Iran-linked militias are also believed to have been Israeli operations.

On Sunday, a drone attack on a Shiite militia convoy in western Iraq reportedly killed a senior commander and up to eight others. The previous night, an Israeli air raid in Syria killed two operatives of the Hezbollah militia, which also blamed Israel for a drone that crashed near its media center south of Beirut. The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed credit only for the Syria operation, saying it had preempted an Iran-directed drone attack on multiple military and civilian targets inside Israel.

Some 15,000 U.S. troops are still based in the country — and could be targets for Iranian reprisals; at the same time, the Iraqi government, which remains allied with Washington, is highly vulnerable to pressure from the Shiite militia groups, which among other things control a large bloc in parliament. That faction reacted to the attack on the militia convoy Sunday by blaming both Israel and the United States and calling for U.S. forces to leave the country.

The Pentagon's response was notable. A statement strongly denied any involvement in the convoy or arms depot attacks and went on to condemn "any potential attacks by external actors inciting violence in Iraq." That would certainly appear to include air raids by Israel. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, meanwhile, was working to prevent an escalation between Lebanon and Israel; according to Lebanese reports, he offered the government assurances that Israel did not intend to rupture a de facto cease-fire with Hezbollah.

Netanyahu faces a tough election next month, and he has been a staunch opponent of any U.S.-Iran rapprochement. He might consider this a good moment to escalate



with Iran; he may also believe that Trump will not object, even if the result is damage to U.S. interests in Iraq and a greater risk of a full-scale war. Unfortunately, on the latter point, he's probably right.

## Should court vacancy arise, Trump is free to nominate Boston Herald

If a seat on the U.S. Supreme Court opens up, President Donald Trump must nominate a judge and the GOP-majority Senate must, if the nominee is qualified, confirm him or her.

Undoubtedly, there will be a loud and raucous chorus of voices decrying such a maneuver and we are already hearing warnings of monumental chaos if the president and the Senate majority leader were to move forward.

As the Herald's Rick Sobey and Sean Philip Carter reported, political prognosticators fear the worst.

"Both sides would be fighting it out as if it's Armageddon," pollster John Zogby said Sunday. "Democrats would be saying, 'This is the end of the world and the end of America as we know it.' It would be a battle royal."

David Axelrod, who was senior adviser to President Barack Obama, tweeted: "If there is a SCOTUS vacancy next year and @senatemajldr carries through on his extraordinary promise to fill it — despite his own previous precedent in blocking Garland — it will tear this country apart."

Pundits expect the GOP Senate would ignore its own 2016 precedent — thereby "enraging Democrats and many moderate independents," said Larry Sabato, of the Center for Politics at University of Virginia.

Both parties would use the issue as a rallying cry at the polls and we could expect horrible behavior on the part of politicians and the media as we saw during the Kavanaugh hearings.

One point of contention will be perceived hypocrisy on the part of Senate Majority Mitch McConnell, who blocked the nomination of Obama nominee Merrick Garland in 2016. At the time, McConnell released a statement, reading, "The American people should have a voice in the selection of their next Supreme Court Justice. Therefore, this vacancy should not be filled until we have a new president."

Already, McConnell has said publicly that if a seat were to open up next year, he'd fill it. He sidesteps accusations of hypocrisy by noting that the president and the Senate belonged to two different political parties in 2016 and that would not be the case in 2020.

"You have to go back to 1880 to find the last time a vacancy created in a presidential election year on the Supreme Court was confirmed by a Senate of a different

party than the president," McConnell told Fox News last October. And of course, even if the Senate had chosen to hold a vote on Garland, the exercise would have been a mere formality, as there is virtually no chance Republican senators would have placed him on the court, with the impending possibility of an alternative, more Scalia-esque nominee just a few months away.

In the case of a hypothetical 2020 vacancy, assuming Trump were to nominate a credible jurist, as he has so far, the Republican Senate majority (which expanded in 2018) is unlikely to have the same qualms about his nominee as they did about Garland.

Such is the nature of politics under a system of divided government. Certainly if the House of Representatives is given the power to open Articles of Impeachment against the president, the Senate has the power to decide whether to hold confirmation hearings for a Supreme Court nominee. Americans should in fact celebrate these checks on the power of the executive branch, especially those Americans who profess concerns about authoritarianism.

## Deserved opioid judgment will help Okla. clean up a crisis Tulsa (Okla.) World

Oklahoma has won a judgment of more than \$572 million against corporate health care giant Johnson & Johnson after showing that the company's role in the state's opioid crisis created a public nuisance that compromised the health and safety of thousands of Oklahomans.

The company says Cleveland County District Judge Thad Balkman's verdict is wrong and has promised an appeal.

But for now, we'll take the court's decision on its face, and declare it another significant victory for the general counsel, General Mills Hunter. Combined with two previous settlements with opioid manufacturers, the state looks to get more than \$900 million in justified compensation from big drug companies.

A judgment of \$572 million is big by any standard, but it's a lot less than the \$17 billion the state had asked for. The larger number anticipated the many years it would take for the state to recover from the opioid crisis. Balkman's judgment says his number covers only one year's costs for the state, and future orders are a possibility.

Hunter's decision to pursue Oklahoma's opioid cases independently of the multi-state case pending in Ohio was brave. If he had lost, he risked being blamed for the state absorbing all the opioid crisis costs. His boldness and his success means the state won't have to split compensation with other litigants and has less risk of losing some or all of its settlements if a drug company declares bankruptcy.

The temptation of a \$572 million windfall

is to celebrate, and it certainly beats losing. But we haven't lost sight of the fact that the money is compensation for the state's costs in a horrific crisis.

Both sides agreed that some 2,100 Oklahomans died of unintentional prescription opioid overdoses from 2011 to 2015; that more than 326 million opioid pills were dispensed in the state in 2015 alone, equivalent to 110 pills for every adult Oklahoman; and that, in 2017, 4.2% of babies covered by the state's Medicaid program were born with withdrawal conditions associated with drug exposure in the womb.

Such human tragedy puts Monday's justice in perspective and is the mark of shame forever upon those responsible.

## No due process in holding families at border indefinitely The Dallas Morning News

The Trump administration's migrant policy has been troubling in many respects from Day One. Now, we are concerned that the administration's decision to allow federal officials to hold migrant families indefinitely is another bad policy in the making.

Every nation has the right to protect and govern its border, and the U.S. is no different. But we also must remain a nation true to ideals of treating the people who come to us fairly and humanely. Eliminating a time limit on detention does not reach that ideal.

Instead, it circumvents a longstanding federal consent decree that provided basic standards for the detention of migrant children.

The issue is due process. Existing immigration policy gives the government a set amount of time — 20 days — to process asylum-seeking foreigners. That ruling signaled that detention was a temporary step as migrants moved through the legal process.

The new rule would eliminate the time children and families can be held in detention, effectively allowing the government to house families in any of its detention facilities or in any area either granted asylum or deportation.

The administration says the changes will avert the need to separate families or release them while they wait for their cases to be heard. However, the administration also concedes that its intent is to scare migrants from presenting themselves at the U.S.-Mexico border. Speaking to reporters, President Donald Trump went so far as to say that the threat would "make it almost impossible for people to come into our country illegally."

Law is always written and applied with an element of deterrence in mind. But the law itself must be fair to begin with and the deterrent is unjust. We must conclude that is the case with the threat of indefinite detention.

Asylum-seekers deserve a process that is clear and fair and that treats their claims seriously and adjudicates them justly. Not all asylum requests will pass muster with immigration courts, nor should they. The penalty for making an asylum request should be months of uncertain detention, however.

There is room to debate whether 20 days provides enough time for immigration officials to review claims and whether there are better ways to prevent children from being used as pawns along the borders. However, such issues are for Congress and the president to resolve through comprehensive bipartisan commitment to addressing these and other unresolved parts of a broadly dysfunctional immigration system.

As a nation, we must secure our borders, block illegal immigration and regulate legal immigration. Temporarily detaining legal migrants without a set timetable for processing is tantamount to denial of due process. It should be rejected.

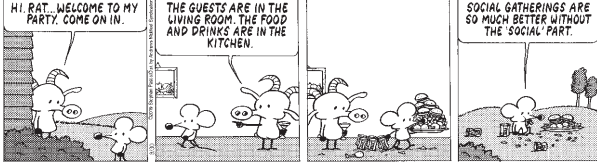
Frazz



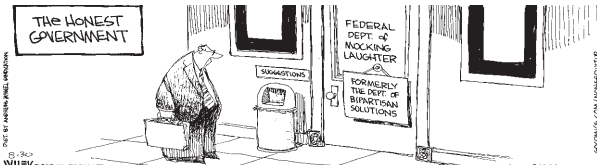
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



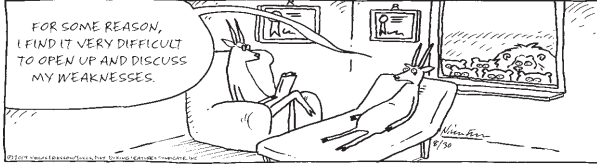
Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12					13			14		
15					16			17		
		18			19			20		
21	22			23				24		
25				26		27		28		
29				30			31		32	33
			35			36		37		
38	39	40				41		42		43
44					45			46		
47				48				49		50
52				53				54		
55				56				57		

## ACROSS

- 1 "It's a Wonderful Life" director
- 9 Schedule abbr.
- 12 "— Grows in Brooklyn"
- 13 "The Bells" author
- 14 Green shade
- 15 Suit
- 16 Like many family films
- 18 Belly button types
- 20 "Casablanca" role
- 21 Blunder
- 23 Docs' org.
- 24 Laundromat machine
- 25 Broadway flop
- 27 Second course?
- 29 Abutting
- 31 "True Colors" singer Cyndi
- 35 Zesty dip
- 37 Eyelid woe
- 38 Irritable
- 41 Epoch
- 43 Nap site
- 44 Rent—
- 45 Panda's diet
- 47 Letter holders
- 49 Anticipate

- 52 100 percent
- 53 Swelled head
- 54 Aquarium favorite
- 55 Observe
- 56 Nine-digit ID
- 57 English county

- 17 Boeing rival
- 19 Spur on
- 21 Recede
- 22 Shad product
- 24 Genetic stuff
- 26 Casual eatery
- 28 Warning sound
- 30 24 hours
- 32 WWII vessels
- 33 CBS logo
- 34 Roulette bet
- 36 Winter, for one
- 38 Spanish snacks
- 39 Paris school
- 40 Shade of black
- 42 Diminish
- 45 Pleads
- 46 Is in debt
- 48 Ballot marks
- 50 Fury
- 51 Levy

## DOWN

- 1 Taxi
- 2 Noshed
- 3 Celeb-promoting groups
- 4 Check
- 5 Insurance giant
- 6 Charm
- 7 Marshy areas
- 8 Sun. talk
- 9 In a proper way
- 10 Della or Pee Wee
- 11 Doppler device

## Answer to Previous Puzzle

A	L	F	A		A	R	K		U	D	O	N
P	E	A	L		C	E	E		T	E	R	I
B	A	I	L		A	P	P		O	V	A	L
S	H	R	E	W		D	T		I	P	P	L
				G	E				N	I	A	
V	O	T	E		M	U	S	C	A	T	E	L
E	R	E		I	S	A		E	M	O		
T	E	L	E	C	A	S	T		B	L	I	
				E	V	A		C	H	I		
P	O	P	E	Y	E		H	E	L	E	N	A
A	P	A	R		A	W	E		L	I	A	M
N	E	T	S		R	E	L		O	N	T	O
E	C	H	O		P	B	S		W	E	E	K

8-30

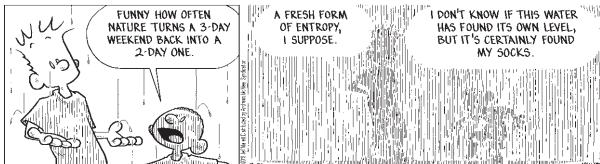
## CRYPTOQUIP

R X S O B W B I Y D H F A B I  
H M O D Z S I M F Q Y I S S Z S A Y B  
Z I S B N V W I D H N A V Q S O Q B Y D M O.

Y X B Y R B Q W D O S - Y D O C A D O C.  
Yesterday's Cryptoquip: IF THERE WERE A PIOUS RELIGIOUS GROUP FOUNDED BY ONE OF THE BEATLES, WOULD THEY BE LENNONITES?  
Today's Cryptoquip Clue: W equals P



Frazz



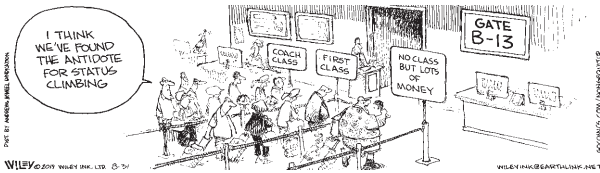
Dilbert



Pearls Before Swine



Non Sequitur



Candorville



Carpe Diem



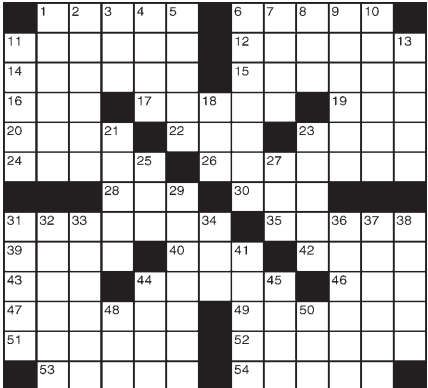
Beetle Bailey



Bizarro



# Eugene Sheffer Crossword



- ACROSS**
- 1 Ticket remnants
  - 6 Summary
  - 11 Sulking
  - 12 Lacking a musical key
  - 14 Dwarfed
  - 15 Cooking oil
  - 16 A billion years
  - 17 Pamphlet
  - 19 Director Howard
  - 20 Lacked originality
  - 22 "No seats" sign
  - 23 Hindu hero
  - 24 Gift of the Magi
  - 26 Hawaiian island
  - 28 Dig in
  - 30 Arrest
  - 31 Game played with cestas
  - 35 Short skirts
  - 39 Eve's mate
  - 40 LP speed
  - 42 Bottle part
  - 43 Yule quaff
  - 44 Offered one's seat
  - 46 Teeny
  - 47 Mistakes in print
  - 49 City of India
  - 51 Folk singer Pete
- DOWN**
- 52 Slander
  - 53 Plane assignments
  - 54 "Tiny Alice" playwright
  - 18 Branch
  - 21 Ambition
  - 23 Small songbird
  - 25 "2001" computer
  - 27 Felon's flight
  - 29 Subjects of
  - 31 Fonda and Doe
  - 32 Loves to pieces
  - 33 "Amen to that!"
  - 34 Wall St. debut
  - 36 Rookie
  - 37 Glacial period
  - 38 Yarn unit
  - 41 Poppa's mate
  - 44 Editor's "keep it"
  - 45 Two-way girder
  - 48 Turkish title
  - 50 World Series org.

## Answer to Previous Puzzle

C	A	P	R	A	B	S	A	R	R
A	T	R	E	E	P	O	E	P	E
B	E	F	I	T	P	G	R	A	T
I N N I E S I L S A									
E	R	A	M	A	D	R	E	R	
B	O	M	B	P	L	A	N	B	
B	E	S	I	D	E	L	A	U	P
S A L S A S T Y E									
T	E	S	T	I	E	R	A	B	E
A	C	A	R	B	A	M	B	O	
P	O	B	O	X	E	S	A	W	A
A	L	L	E	G	O	T	E	T	R
S	E	E	S	S	N	E	S	S	X

8-31

## CRYPTOQUIP

EXFSXFHIG AF EXLA MKXM'Q

XJJFAZHEXMGPL KXPTOXL

MAOXFV HMQ GZJHFXMHAI

VXMG: EHVVPG-XSG QJFGXV.

**Yesterday's Cryptoquip:** WHEN A PARTICULAR CONIFEROUS TREE FELT A FREAKY PRICKLY SENSATION, THAT WAS PINE-TINGLING.

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: L equals Y

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The Daily Guide to Navigating the European Business Market



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902

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944

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## BASKETBALL



TIM REYNOLDS/AP

**U.S. men's basketball coach Gregg Popovich signs autographs for fans Thursday at the team hotel in Shanghai. The U.S. will begin World Cup play Sunday with the first of three first-round games.**

## US arrives in China ahead of World Cup

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

SHANGHAI — After a month of practice and years of planning, the U.S. men's basketball team has arrived at the World Cup.

An all-night flight from Sydney to Shanghai that landed early Thursday brought the two-time defending World Cup champion Americans to China's most-populous city, where they'll play three first-round games starting Sunday. It took more than 10 hours of flying time, then another two-plus hours for the team to clear customs and finally reach its hotel.

From there, a few hours of relaxing awaited before an afternoon practice.

"The challenges begin," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said.

A handful of fans waited outside the team hotel on a rainy morning, getting there a couple of hours before the buses from the airport pulled in just with the hope of grabbing a few autographs. Some players obliged, as did Popovich — who used a gold marker to carefully sign his name on an array of photos, sneakers and basketballs.

Players said finally getting to China brought a different feel.

"It's kicked in," U.S. guard Kemba Walker of the Boston Celtics said after practice. "The next game we play, it's the real thing. We're focused, we're locked in and we're ready to play."

It's not like there haven't been challenges already. Just consider the travel itineraries for the U.S. to this point.

The flights from Los Angeles to Melbourne, then Melbourne to Sydney and now Sydney to Shanghai add up to nearly 30 hours and 14,000 miles in the air. If the U.S. makes the medal round, there'll be about another 2,500 miles of travel within China. Add the return flight to the U.S. after the tournament, and the trip's total will easily exceed 22,000 miles — more than half a regular season's worth of travel for most NBA teams.

All that flying comes in the

span of basically a month.

And that doesn't even count what it took for players to individually reach Las Vegas and Los Angeles, the site of the two training camp weeks, or the promotional trip to China that Donovan Mitchell made earlier this summer.

"I think we're good," said Mitchell, the Utah Jazz standout who has seen quite a following in China on his past trips to the basketball-crazed nation. "I think we're doing well. We got here and guys' energy in practice was great, guys were sharp. When you start to worry about how much we've been traveling, that's when it starts to become a mental thing."

The Americans went 3-1 on their pre-World Cup tour, beating Spain in Anaheim, Calif., then splitting two games against Australia in Melbourne — the loss snapping a 78-game winning streak for the senior national team against major competition, dating back to 2006 — before topping Canada in the final tuneup.

Up next on Sunday is the Czech Republic, an opponent that caught Popovich's eye for the way it battled Lithuania in a pre-World Cup friendly.

"We don't take anybody lightly," Popovich said.

Popovich noted that there hadn't been much time for sight-seeing on the opening day in Shanghai, and it wouldn't seem that it'll be a priority over the next week, either. There's more practices set for Friday and Saturday, then games starting every other day beginning with the matchup against the Czechs.

"We have a great team of guys, very unselfish group," Bucks center Brook Lopez said before the team left Australia. "We all have the same goal in mind. A lot of young guys, so we have a lot of guys who are learning on the fly. We don't have a problem being a team. Our guys have come together really quick."

And now, with the trip to the other side of the world finally complete, the games now count.

# At 34, Raptors' Gasol carrying Spain's hope

By TIM REYNOLDS  
Associated Press

SHANGHAI — Marc Gasol is 34 years old, which means he's particularly fond of off-seasons.

He didn't get much of one this year.

There's a very good reason for that — a most unusual and, he thinks, worthwhile opportunity. After helping the Toronto Raptors win the NBA championship in June, Gasol is now looking to lead Spain to a World Cup title in September. And although the 7-foot-1 veteran center's body may have preferred some more down time before the grind of another season begins, Gasol could not pass up this chance.

"It's a special group of guys," Gasol said. "It's always special when you put on this jersey. And I couldn't leave them hanging. That's what my heart told me and that's what it keeps telling me."

Gasol was on the team that won the World Cup — then called the world championship — for Spain in 2006, rolling past a Greece team that had just beaten the United States in the tournament semifinals. He helped Spain win silver medals at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics, losing both times in the title game to the U.S.

He's the oldest player on a very seasoned team that will play for Spain in this World Cup. Of the 12 on the final roster for coach Sergio Scariolo, eight have celebrated their 30th birthdays already. But it's also clear that Gasol, even on a roster featuring the likes of Phoenix's Ricky Rubio and Real Madrid standout Sergio Llull, is the leader of the bunch.

"It was probably a key move for us, one of the important ones, the most important one," Scariolo said. "We need somebody to be the guy who you can give the ball in the tough moments, not necessarily for the shot but to make a good play — whether it's to create a shot for a teammate, to take a shot himself, to draw a foul and be a solid free-throw shooter. He's extremely important and the rest of the players respect him a lot."

That respect was there before Toronto topped Golden State in six games for the NBA title.

But the ring Gasol will be getting on opening night certainly adds to his legacy.

Among players born outside the United States, Gasol is one of only seven — a list that also includes his older brother Pau Gasol, who would have played in this World Cup had he not gotten injured last season — to have amassed more than 11,000 points, 6,000 rebounds and 2,700 assists at the NBA level. And when the Raptors added him in a trade last Febru-



MARCIO JOSE SANCHEZ/AP

**Spain's Marc Gasol shoots over the United States' Mason Plumlee during the first half of an exhibition basketball game Friday in Anaheim, Calif. At 34, Gasol is the oldest player for Spain.**

ary, their entire makeup seemed to change.

"I think we started passing the ball, our assists started going way up, we became the No. 1 three-point shooting team in the league because of the extra passes and the contagious passing," said Raptors coach Nick Nurse, who is coaching Canada at the World Cup. "And our team's sense of who they thought they could become went up."

The same could ring true for Spain.

The U.S. has won the last two World Cups, though a third consecutive gold in the event — something that no nation has ever accomplished — hardly seems guaranteed. Spain lost to the Americans by nine in an

exhibition earlier this month in Anaheim, Calif., a game where neither side was exactly in tournament form.

Spain should have little, if any, trouble getting through its group phase: It faces Iran, Tunisia and the Dominican Republic in its first three games at Guangzhou, China starting on Friday. The top two teams will advance to the second round. Those first three games will likely become more tuneups for Gasol and the Spaniards as they get ready for the bigger matchups later in the tournament.

"The teams that are in the past, they're in the past," Gasol said. "What matters is the guys who are playing today and their talent and their qualities."



# US OPEN/COLLEGE FOOTBALL

# Djokovic deals with pain, Federer survives deficits

By HOWARD FENDRICH  
Associated Press

**NEW YORK** — Maybe, just maybe, Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer are feeling some lingering aftereffects of their historic Wimbledon final last month.

For Djokovic, it's in the form of a left shoulder that is hurting right now and probably contributed to slower-than-usual serves in the U.S. Open's second round Wednesday night.

For Federer, it's in the form of slow starts: He's lost the opening set each of his first two matches at Flushing Meadows for the first time in 19 times he's entered the Grand Slam tournament.

If they're going to reprise their rivalry late next week in the semifinals, both will need to improve.

Djokovic was repeatedly visited by a trainer for shoulder massages at changeovers during a ragged 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-1 victory over 56th-ranked Juan Ignacio Londero of Argentina. Djokovic is a righty, of course, but he uses his other hand both for ball tosses on serves and on his two-fisted backhand — and both were fisted after for stretches.

"I was definitely tested. This is something I've been carrying for quite a while now," said Djokovic, who repeatedly shook his left arm between points while serving in his first-round match Monday and did that again this time. "It wasn't easy playing with the pain and you have to fight and hope you get lucky with some shots."

Even though he won for the 35th time in his past 36 Slam matches, including in a fifth-set tiebreaker against Federer at the All England Club on July 14, the

## Scoreboard

**Wednesday**  
**At USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center**  
**New York**  
**Purse: \$57,238,700**  
**Second Round**  
**Men's Singles**  
Grigor Dimitrov, Bulgaria, def. Borna Coric (12), Croatia, walkover.  
Kei Nishikori (7), Japan, def. Bradley Klahn, United States, 6-2, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.  
Roger Federer (3), Switzerland, def. Damir Dzumhur, Bosnia-Herzegovina, 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4.  
Novak Djokovic (1), Serbia, def. Juan Ignacio Londero, Argentina, 6-4, 7-6 (3), 6-1.  
**Women's Singles**  
Dominik Koepfer, Germany, def. Reilly Opelka, United States, 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (2).  
**Second Round**  
Karolina Pliskova (3), Czech Republic, def. Maria Bolkvadz, Georgia, 6-1, 6-4.  
Elina Svitolina (5), Ukraine, def. Venus Williams, United States, 6-4, 6-4.  
Madison Keys (10), United States, def. Zhu Lin, China, 6-4, 6-1.  
Ashleigh Barty (2), Australia, def. Lauren Davis, United States, 6-2, 7-6 (2).  
Serena Williams (8), United States, def. Katy McNally, United States, 5-7, 6-3, 6-1.

Serb looked uncomfortable and went away for stretches, including trailing 3-0 in the second set.

Asked how he plans to prepare for his next match Friday, Djokovic replied with a laugh: "I'll probably freeze my arm for 48 hours, not do anything with it, and then see what happens."

Federer, meanwhile, is not about to start trying new tricks now, despite needing to come back twice already.

He got to the third round by beating Damir Dzumhur 3-6, 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 on an afternoon when rain postponed all but nine scheduled singles matches and every doubles contest.

Still, it's not as if the guy is going to seek some sort of magic

solution. Working up more of a sweat in the gym before heading to the court, say. Or playing an extra practice set.

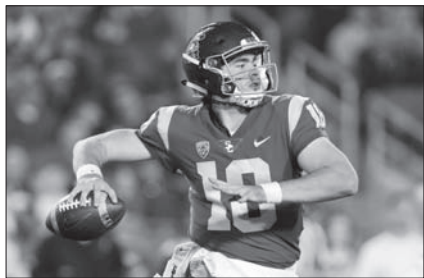
What he chose to focus on, instead, is looking on the bright side: "Can only do better," Federer said, "which is a great thing, moving forward."

At a Flushing Meadows flush with surprises so far — half of the top 12-seeded men already were gone by the time Federer stepped into Arthur Ashe Stadium — he cleaned up his act quickly.

Indeed, Federer was one of the lucky ones who will stay on the usual play-one-day, get-a-day-off Grand Slam schedule. Only matches at Ashe or Louis Armstrong Stadium, the event's two arenas with retractable roofs, were held.

That included a loss by two-time champion Venus Williams to No. 5 seed Elina Svitolina, and victories for No. 2 Ash Barty, No. 3 Karolina Pliskova and 2017 runner-up Madison Keys on the women's side, and a win for No. 7 Kei Nishikori on the men's. In the last matches completed on Day 3, which both ended at around midnight, Serena Williams came back to beat 17-year-old American Katy McNally 5-7, 6-3, 6-1, and qualifier Dominik Koepfer of Germany eliminated Reilly Opelka of the U.S. 6-4, 6-4, 7-6 (2).

"You go through a little phase where you don't start so well and everybody asks you right away, 'What are you going to do?' You're like, I don't know. Just go back to the drawing board. Just do the same things again. You hope for a better outcome," said Federer, owner of a total of 20 major trophies, four ahead of Djokovic.



ALEX GALLARDO/AP

**Quarterback JT Daniels will lead a Southern Cal team with a coach on the hot seat. The Trojans open the season against Fresno State.**

## Five things to watch

# Pac-12 referendum; Southern Cal's start

By RALPH D. RUSSO  
Associated Press

The first full slate of the college football season brings with it another referendum game for the Pac-12, highlighting a schedule light on marquee matchups.

No. 11 Oregon against No. 16 Auburn in Arlington, Texas, on Saturday is the only game of Week 1 with two ranked teams. It's a big opportunity for the Ducks and the Pac-12, which has not sent a team to the College Football Playoff since 2016.

Last season, Washington came all the way across the country to face Auburn in Atlanta on opening weekend, and the Huskies were handed a loss that helped keep the eventual Pac-12 champions out of the playoff.

Things to know as the season starts with a long Labor Day weekend filled with football:

## Game of the week

### Oregon vs. Auburn

The Ducks are a trendy pick to win the Pac-12 after going 9-4 last season. They have a highly touted pro prospect at quarterback in Justin Herbert and one of the best offensive lines in the country. Guard Shane Lemieux was a first-team AP preseason All-American and tackle Calvin Throckmorton was selected to the second team.

Auburn counters with one of the top defensive lines, led by preseason All-America tackle Derrick Brown.

Tigers coach Gus Malzahn, perpetually on the hot seat with a finicky fan-base, is going with freshman and former five-star recruit Bo Nix at quarterback.

## Heisman watch

A big game against Auburn would help Herbert make an early statement in the Heisman race. A couple of transfer quarterbacks get the opportunity to make good first impressions with their new teams against far less daunting competition.

No. 5 Ohio State opens against FAU at home on Saturday with former Georgia quarterback Justin Fields running the show. Fields had some promising moments as a backup last season for

the Bulldogs, but saw little action when games were in doubt. New Buckeyes coach Ryan Day should be able to ease Fields in against the Owls.

Former Alabama quarterback Jalen Hurts gets his first start with No. 4 Oklahoma on Sunday against Houston. Hurts replaces Heisman winner Kyler Murray, who replaced Heisman winner Baker Mayfield. Can Sooners coach Lincoln Riley make it three straight?

## Numbers to know

**11** — Consecutive losses by Rutgers entering the season, the longest active losing streak in the country. The Scarlet Knights open the season against UMass on Friday. Rutgers is also celebrating the 150th anniversary of the first college football game, played on the campus in 1869 between Rutgers and Princeton.

**15** — Consecutive victories for Clemson entering the season, the longest current streak in the country. The Tigers will also put a 15-game home winning streak and 13-game conference streak on the line.

## Under the radar

Lots of coaching debuts that aren't getting much of attention. Most notably,

■ Mack Brown coaches his first game in his second stint at North Carolina against South Carolina in Charlotte on Saturday.

■ Les Miles' first games as Kansas coach come against Indiana State, an FCS opponent, on Saturday.

## Hot seat

Southern California coach Jay Helton begins a pivotal season Saturday against Fresno State, the defending Mountain West champion. USC is coming off a losing season that nearly cost Helton his job. Instead, he was allowed to overhaul his coaching staff and give it another go. Helton will need to have the Trojans clicking early. Fresno State is coming off consecutive double-digit victory seasons, though has some retooling to do this year under coach Jeff Tedford. After Fresno State, USC faces No. 25 Stanford, BYU, No. 14 Utah and No. 13 Washington, all bowl teams last season.



CHARLES KRUPA/AP

Serbia's Novak Djokovic receives treatment on his left shoulder from a trainer Wednesday during his second-round win against Argentina's Juan Ignacio Londero as the U.S. Open in New York

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Miami quarterback Jarren Williams, left, is sacked by defensive linemen Adam Shuler, center, and Jabari Zuniga, right, during Florida's 24-20 win last week in Orlando, Fla. The SEC is 21-6 in regular-season non-conference games against Power Five opponents at neutral sites since 2012.

## Last days for neutral sites?

Non-conference home-and-home series gaining popularity in the SEC

BY STEVE MEGARGEE  
Associated Press

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — This is the time of year when the Southeastern Conference usually validates its claim as the best league in college football by dominating neutral-site, non-conference matchups.

No. 8 Florida's 24-20 victory over Miami last week at Orlando, Fla., improved the SEC's record to 21-6 in regular-season, non-conference games against Power Five opponents at neutral sites since 2012. Alabama is 9-0 in these types of games since 2008.

"We've had a lot of games in Atlanta, we've had some in Dallas, we've had some other games in other places that have given the program a lot of exposure, which I think is really important," Alabama coach Nick Saban said. "I think when you play a good opponent early on, the whole focus in the off-season, spring practice, fall camp is always a little better because players feel they're going to be challenged in the first game."

No. 2 Alabama meets Duke in Atlanta on Saturday while No. 16 Auburn faces No. 11 Oregon at Arlington, Texas, and South Carolina plays North Carolina at Charlotte, N.C.

These neutral-site showdowns might not be so common years from now. More of them could take place on campuses instead of NFL stadiums.

SEC schools are upgrading schedules by adding noteworthy home-and-home, non-conference series.

Alabama has added series with Notre Dame (2028-29), Oklahoma (2032-33), Texas (2022-23), West Virginia (2026-27) and Wisconsin (2024-25). Georgia scheduled Florida State (2027-28), Oklahoma (2023 and 2031) and Texas (2028-29). Florida set up dates with Colorado (2028-29), Miami (2024-25) and Texas (2030-31).

"With more home-and-homes coming on board here, that might restrict and cut into the number of neutral-site games moving forward," said Dave Brown, the former ESPN head of college football scheduling whose Gridiron software is used by many schools to arrange non-conference matchups.

This represents a change in philosophy for some schools. Florida hasn't played a non-conference, home-and-home series outside the Sunshine State since facing Memphis (then known as Memphis State) in 1988-89. The Gators haven't played a non-conference, regular-season, road game outside of Florida since visiting Syracuse in 1991.

"We are looking at and saying, 'OK, the future of college football is these home-and-home games,'" Florida coach Dan Mullen said. "I think they may



VASHA MUNT/AP

Alabama head coach Nick Saban has added non-conference home-and-home series with Notre Dame (2028-29), Oklahoma (2032-33), Texas (2022-23), West Virginia (2026-27) and Wisconsin (2024-25).

possibly make it more attractive for people to come to the games and create that game-day environment that (makes it) more exciting to see a different opponent."

The SEC has led all conferences in average attendance every year since 1998, but it's not immune to industry-wide struggles to attract spectators. Average attendance in the league has slipped three straight seasons and hit 73,994 last year, its lowest mark since 2002.

"TV people talk about content — content is king," Texas A&M athletic director Ross Bjork said. "We have to look at it the same way. What content do we have to drive our fan experience, drive ticket sales, help promote the university, market the university?"

SEC programs often make more money from a home game than a neutral-site contest.

For instance, Tennessee received \$2.85 million for facing Georgia Tech in Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium in 2017 and got \$2.9 million for meeting West Virginia in Charlotte last year. Tennessee expects to receive \$3.8 million per home game in ticket sales alone this season, before parking or concession revenues are included.

## NCAA's rulings on transfers bringing teams angst, relief

BY RALPH D. RUSSO  
Associated Press

With the college football season set to start for most teams this weekend, the NCAA has been handing down rulings left and right in waiver cases involving transfers seeking immediate eligibility.

Tennessee and Iowa got good news on a couple of high-profile players. Georgia Tech got one of its two waiver requests. And at Virginia Tech, offensive lineman Brock Hoffman had his final appeal for immediate eligibility denied, a decision that prompted Hoffman's father to post on Twitter a letter directed at NCAA President Mark Emmert that said the family will be "seeking legal counsel."

"The Process that you put my family through by giving us different reasons for denial and having us jump through hoops to gather different information every time we submitted it, shows how flawed your system really is," Brian Hoffman wrote in the letter posted Wednesday.

Hoffman's case highlights the frustration many players, parents, coaches, schools and fans have with the immediate eligibility waiver. When an NCAA directive opened the door last year for more athletes to gain immediate eligibility through the waiver process after transferring, it seemed like a reasonable compromise between the longtime transfer rules in football and some other sports that allow all transfers to switch schools without sitting out. Instead, it has created more outrage directed at the NCAA.

Tim Nevius, an attorney and former NCAA investigator who has worked on transfer waiver cases, said the NCAA needs to make uniform transfer rules across all college sports regarding transfers and immediate eligibility.

"I also think because of the perception that there are inconsistent decisions made on eligibility waivers that that puts a lot of pressure on the system to change as well," said Nevius, a former college baseball player.

The revised waiver process led to quarterback Shea Patterson playing last season for Michigan and quarterback Justin Fields being eligible this season at Ohio State after transferring from Georgia.

The NCAA does not publicly comment on waiver decisions, and it's hard to do so in the case of Hoffman, who transferred from Coastal Carolina to Virginia Tech in the offseason. Hoffman said the move was to be closer to his mother, who had surgery to remove a non-cancerous brain tumor two years ago. The family lives in Statesville, N.C., and playing in Blacksburg, Va., brought him about three hours closer to



TONY DING/AP

Former Michigan defensive back Myles Sims, now at Georgia Tech, was among the transfers granted immediate eligibility.

home by car.

The final ruling from the NCAA on Hoffman was announced Tuesday. His response on Twitter was to thank those who supported him and say he is looking forward to playing in 2020. His job at the NCAA came in the form of an old photo posted on Twitter of former Oklahoma linebacker Brian Bowser, who often butted heads with the NCAA, wearing a T-shirt that read National Communists Against Athletics.

For Tennessee defensive lineman Aubrey Solomon and Iowa receiver Oliver Martin, both Michigan transfers, NCAA rulings that came down this week were cause for celebration. Both were granted immediate eligibility.

The long wait, however, was excruciating.

"I'm excited for Aubrey," Tennessee coach Jeremy Pruitt said. "I know it's been hard on him."

Georgia Tech had immediate eligibility granted to defensive back Myles Sims, another player who left Michigan, but it was denied defensive lineman Antonneau Clayton, who previously attended Florida.

It was only a few weeks ago that Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh was criticized for being an obstructionist in an immediate eligibility waiver case involving offensive lineman James Hudson, who is now at Cincinnati and had his request denied.

Nevius is quick to point out that most coaches are against a uniform rule that would allow football players to use a one-time exception to transfer and play immediately, which would pretty much eliminate the need for waivers. That rule exists in many other NCAA sports. Harbaugh is one of the few coaches who has publicly come out in favor of allowing football players to use a one-time exception.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## Bison riding herd in the FCS

By DAVE KOLPACK  
Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. — The most dominant team in the history of the Football Championship Subdivision has had turnovers in so many places — head coach, assistant coaches, quarterback and nearly 70% of its starting lineup.

It would seem that this year's playoff might be more than the race for second place. Except for the fact that defending champion North Dakota State's depth chart is a work of art.

The Bison, who have won seven of the past eight national championships, the most in FCS history, have been through this before. After winning the program's first three titles under coach Craig Bohl, the 2014 team entered the season having lost virtually its entire staff to Wyoming and 30 players, including quarterback Brock Jensen, to graduation. The Bison went 14-1 and won a fourth straight championship.

That's one reason why coach Brock Spack, who has built a formidable program at Illinois State, said he doesn't see a different outlook this season.

"In the years I've been here, the names have changed on the back of the jersey, but the player looks the same every time we play North Dakota State," Spack said. "I don't think they're going to go far from their formula. I think they're set up to be very good for a long time."

Colgate coach Dan Hunt, who last year engineered a playoff victory over James Madison, the only other team to win an FCS crown during North Dakota State's run, said he believes the Ducks and South Dakota State have the talent to compete with the Bison.

That opinion comes with a caveat.

"They have a championship mind and a championship culture," Hunt said of the Bison. "Nothing is guaranteed, but they are going to be the preeminent team on our level for some time. It's up to the other programs to try to catch up."

Bison coach Matt Entz, the team's former defensive coordinator, has replaced Chris Klieman now at Kansas State. Entz responded quickly when asked if he planned any changes: "Nothing major at all."

"There might be a few wrinkles here and there but the things that have made Bison football special over the last 25 years are still here," Entz said. "I don't think the average fan would notice anything different. We're still going to run the football until we can't run it anymore."

Despite losing their top two rushers, Entz said running back is one of the areas that most positions. Ty Brooks averaged 7.1 yards per run and Adam Coffield 6.9 a year ago. Dimitri Williams, making the transition from wide receiver, is listed as the No. 2 back and redshirt freshman Saybin Clark is in the mix along with true freshmen Jalen Bussey and Kobe Johnson, perhaps the fastest of all backs.



JEFFREY McWHORTER/AP

North Dakota State running back Seth Wilson, second from right, is one of the few returning starters for the Bison, who are replacing eight players on offense and seven on defense from a team that won the school's seventh national championship in eight years.

**"I don't think they're going to go far from their formula. I think they're set up to be very good for a long time."**

**Brock Spack**

Illinois State coach on North Dakota State's dominance

Freshman Trey Lance, who earlier this week was named the starting quarterback, averaged 10.2 yards a pop when he played two games under last year's new rule that allowed freshmen to play four games and still keep their redshirts.

Lance, a highly touted recruit from Marshall, Minn., replaces three-time FCS champ and Los Angeles Chargers' quarterback hopeful Easton Stick, who replaced two-time national champion and Philadelphia Eagles QB Carson Wentz, who replaced Jensen, a three-time division winner and Canadian Football League player. Entz said his new quarterback "needs to be the best Trey Lance he can be" and not worry about his predecessors.

"I'm just Trey Lance," he said. "If I can become as good as those guys one day, that would be awesome."

The 6-foot-3, 231-pound Lance, a threat to run and throw, said he learned a lot from Stick but added that winning the starting job over Iowa State transfer Zeb Noland doesn't mean "I have arrived or anything like that."

The Bison also bring back their quarterback on defense, linebacker Jabril Cox, an NFL Draft prospect selected for several pre-season honors. Cox led the team last year with 91 total tackles and

added four sacks and four interceptions. He said he's confident in the newcomers on the field.

"I think we reloaded pretty well and the young guys are ready for the test," Cox said.

### Best of the rest?

The Bison, who open the season Aug. 31 against Butler at Target Field, home of the Minnesota Twins, were picked first in the American Football Coaches Association preseason poll, followed by James Madison, Eastern Washington, South Dakota State and UC Davis.

James Madison and South Dakota State's fortunes could depend on quarterback play. Ben DiNucci of the Ducks threw for 16 touchdowns and ran for a team-high nine scores, but he threw 12 interceptions, including five in the playoff loss to Colgate. Redshirt freshman J'More Gibbs of South Dakota State mirrors Lance's size and skillset — along with the lack of experience.

Eastern Washington, which lost to North Dakota State in the title game last season, is led by quarterback Eric Barriere, who took over in the sixth week and piled up 2,450 yards and 24 touchdowns passing and 606 yards and eight touchdowns on the ground.



SUE OGROCKU/AP

Coach Lincoln Riley and his Oklahoma team open their season Sunday in Norman, Okla., against Houston, which shocked the Sooners 33-23 in the teams' 2016 opener.

# Oklahoma knows Houston capable of derailing year

By CLIFF BRUNT  
Associated Press

NORMAN, Okla. — Oklahoma defensive lineman Neville Gallimore remembers his first game as a Sooner.

It was an unpleasant stroll down memory lane.

Oklahoma entered the 2016 season with high hopes after reaching the College Football Playoff. The third-ranked Sooners fell apart in the opener as No. 15 Houston pulled off a 33-23 stunner. The Sooners eventually won the Big 12 and beat Auburn in the Sugar Bowl, but they missed out on the playoff for the only time in the past four seasons.

"I was in my first year, my redshirt freshman year," Gallimore said. "Those guys played great ball. They got after us. But that was then. That's in the past now."

No. 4 Oklahoma is coming off another trip to the playoff and will open the season again against Houston this weekend. The Sooners are eager to avoid a repeat of a loss that derailed Oklahoma's national title hopes in Bob Stoops' final season.

"We know they're still a great football team," Gallimore said. "We know that they're going to come and bring it to us on Sunday. We've just got to make sure that we're ready."

Oklahoma coach Lincoln Riley was the offensive coordinator in 2016. He said the Sooners played awful against Houston that year, and that there's plenty that can be learned about focus from that loss.

"Yeah, there's certainly teaching moments," he said. "When you play a good team in the opener, you can't do things like we did in that game. We turned the ball over. We had an enormous special teams mistake. We gave up a ton of third downs defensively. We had a lot of missed opportunities against a good football team that



Houston (0-0)  
at Oklahoma (0-0)

AFN-Sports  
1:30 a.m. Monday CET  
8:30 a.m. Monday JKT

day that we didn't do very well."

Houston is dangerous again, led by senior quarterback D'Eriq King. He passed for 2,982 yards and 36 touchdowns and ran for 674 yards and 14 scores last season. Running back Patrick Carr and receivers Marquez Stevenson and Keith Corbin are back, as well. Carr ran for 873 yards last season. Stevenson had 1,019 yards and nine touchdowns receiving last season, while Corbin had 691 yards and 10 scores.

"It's certainly going to be a challenge, there's no doubt," Riley said. "This is a really good football team coming in here. Our guys know that. Our guys have a healthy respect for Houston, the players they have, the coaches they have and know we need to play very well."

The chess match has already started between the coaches. On Monday, Riley released a depth chart with only an emoji — the same one he uses on Twitter when the Sooners snag a major recruit.

First-year Houston coach Dana Holgorsen on Monday said he wouldn't be releasing a depth chart, either.

"I've always released a depth chart ... why they don't put one out is kind of silly to me," he said. "So if they're not putting one out, I ain't putting one out. I guess I'll put one out with those little funny eyes and stuff like that."



## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## All-America watch

## Chase scene: Buckeyes DE not just talk

Ohio State's Young looks for second straight season of double-digit sacks

By MITCH STACY  
Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Chase Young is one chatty Buckeye, and he has the game to back up the big talk.

Young is No. 5 Ohio State's best player and was named to the preseason Associated Press All-America team presented by Regions Bank. The 6-foot-5, 265-pound defensive end with startling quickness and a mean streak rarely stops cheering, cajoling and trash-talking.

"Every day we're expected to have the most juice," Young said of the defensive front.

Last year, after star defensive end Nick Bosa went down with an injury in the third game, Young carried the flag for the Buckeyes' "Rushmen," piling up 10 sacks, 15.5 tackles for a loss and 77 quarterback pressures and establishing himself as one of the most dynamic linemen in the country. The Maryland native did it a lot of the time with some ankles.

Young became only the eighth player in Ohio State history to record double-digit sacks in a season. If he can do it again in this, his junior year and likely his last in Columbus, he will become only the second to have double-digits sacks in a season. Mike Vrabel, now head coach of the NFL's Tennessee Titans, did it in 1994 and '95.

Rated as the seventh overall prospect nationally coming out of high school in 2017, Young is bright on the national radar now, and is set up for monster year as the Buckeyes featured pass

rusher.

"I feel like looking at the film from last year, I can use my hands a lot better," Young said. "I feel like I can get off the ball better. It's just a lot of stuff where I'm really nifty about."

This season he's also expected to set an example.

"The guys like him," Ohio State coach Ryan Day said. "He has a happy-go-lucky personality. I see more seriousness now. I think he knows this is his time to step up and be a leader."

Defensive line coach Larry Johnson can hardly wait to see what's going to happen. He's got a guy who's nearly as good, Jonathan Cooper, at the other defensive end position, experienced interior linemen and tons of depth.

"Chase is going to get double-teamed, so that turns three guys loose," Johnson said. "Our inside guys have to be really good pass rushers. That's been our focus from the day we ended (last) season, to get ready for that. If they double-team Chase, we've got one-on-one on the inside, and I'll take that all day. And we'll move Chase around from right to left, so they'll have to find him."

Young will be expected to pace a defense that struggled during stretches last season.

Day brought in new defensive coaches — Johnson is the only holdover — and installed a new scheme that is in some ways more basic. Safety Jordan Fuller, a preseason second-team all-American, anchors the secondary, and all three starting linebackers return.



Jay LaPrete/AP

Indiana quarterback Peyton Ramsey throws a pass just before being hit by Ohio State defensive end Chase Young, who had 10 sacks and 77 quarterback pressures last season. Young, considered one of the team's best trash-talkers, was elected the captain by the Buckeyes this season.

None of Young's teammates will be telling him to tone down the talking, although he may need to get a handle on his enthusiasm. In the Rutgers game last year, Young got himself ejected for unsportsmanlike conduct because of his exuberant celebrating.

"He's awesome," linebacker Pete Werner said. "He gets me pumped up. As far as taking a leadership role, he's made big steps. He's that guy now on the team that everybody is going to learn from."

## All-America matchup

Stanford OT Walker Little vs.

Northwestern LB Paddy Fisher.

Little is a preseason first-team all-American for No. 25 Stanford. A consensus five-star recruit and No. 1 prospect in the country in 2017, the 6-foot-7, 315-pound left tackle is a force. Fisher, a second-team all-American, has proven to be one of the best defensive players ever at Northwestern with 229 tackles in his first two seasons.

## Who's hot

Jonathan Greenard, OLB, Florida

The transfer from Louisville, who missed all but a few plays last season with a gruesome wrist

injury, was part of a relentless pass rush for the Gators against Miami. Florida finished with 10 sacks and they were spread around.

No player had more than two. Greenard finished with 1.5 and looked very much like the player who had a breakout season for the Cardinals in 2017.

## Who's not

Jeff Thomas, WR, Miami

The speedster had a crucial muffed punt and was kept quiet (two catches for 28 yards) by Florida cornerbacks C.J. Henderson and Marco Wilson.

## Georgia's game with Vandy is a new twist, for openers

By PAUL NEWBERRY  
Associated Press

ATHENS, Ga. — Well, this is something different.

For the first time since 1995, No. 3 Georgia will begin the season against a South-eastern Conference foe. When the Bulldogs hit the road to face Vanderbilt on Saturday night, it will mark only the fourth time in the last quarter-century that they have kicked things off beyond the state line.

"I love it," senior defensive back J.R. Reed said Monday. "It's the SEC. It's here. It's right in your face."

In recent years, Georgia has routinely opened against a non-Power 5 opponent within the friendly confines of Sanford Stadium, though there have been a few exceptions such as Clemson, North Carolina and Oklahoma State.

Clashing with an SEC team right off the bat — even a perennial back marker such as Vanderbilt — adds a greater sense of urgency.

"We have a lot of guys who haven't had

**“That is what we want to do as a team. We want to get tested early and be able to set the tone early as a team.”**

Jake Fromm  
Georgia QB

coming up just short of making the College Football Playoff last year.

With two of the nation's top players in quarterback Jake Fromm and running back D'Andre Swift, the Bulldogs are expected to again be in the thick of the race for No. 1.

They certainly can't afford to slip up against Vanderbilt, which has made bowl

their feet in the fire," coach Kirby Smart said. "We try to make scrimmages as tense as possible to create that feeling, but ultimately we will find out a lot about our team."

Georgia faces another round of soaring expectations after losing in the national championship game two seasons ago.

appearances two of the last three years under coach Derek Mason but hasn't finished with a winning record since 2013.

"Anytime you play a game here in the SEC, it's going to be a tough, physical game," Fromm said. "You set the tone early. That is what we want to do as a team. We want to get tested early and be able to set the tone early as a team."

Georgia has dominated the series, holding a 57-20-2 edge, though Vanderbilt has won two of the last six meetings — including a 17-16 upset in Athens during Smart's first season as coach. But the Bulldogs have romped to easy victories the last two years, winning by an average margin of nearly 30 points, and they are a three-touchdown favorite this year.

No matter what happens in the opener, there is still a long season ahead.

"Win or lose, it is not going to define you," Smart said. "I do think the narrative (for the season) is set a lot of times off the first game, especially if it is a nationally televised game and you are out there playing a quality conference opponent who we

think is a really good player and a really good team."

The big drawback to opening on the road, according to Smart, is only being able to take a 70-man travel roster. Some of the younger guys won't get a chance to pick up valuable playing time, though there should be plenty of opportunities the next two weeks with home games against Murray State and Arkansas State.

"There are going to be some guys sitting at home that are really good football players for us," Smart said.

The biggest question mark for the Bulldogs is the receiving corps, which lost its top five pass-catchers from last season. The NFL Draft claimed receivers Mecole Hardman, Riley Ridley and Terry Godwin, along with tight end Isaac Nauta. The group took another blow when junior receiver Jeremiah Holloman was kicked off the team over allegations that he punched and choked his girlfriend.

Tyler Simmons, a senior with just 14 catches in his career, ranks as the Bulldogs' top returner.

## COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## How to see the Top 25 by attending 17 games

By NOAH TRISTER  
Associated Press

**D**o a quick web search for "college football road trip" and a number of creative possibilities come up.

The Sporting News outlined an impressive journey that includes several quick turnarounds. The travel mileage is helpfully included. Herosports.com mapped out a schedule of nearly 50 games — and even offered an FCS version too. The Athlon Sports version has a restriction: You can't see any team more than once. That certainly leads to some tough decisions.

These trips would of course require a serious commitment of both money and time. But planning them out is still a fun way to look ahead to the season. So here's The Associated Press contribution to the genre, in which we lean heavily on the recently released preseason Top 25. There are only two rules for our college football dream itinerary:

1. We must see every team in the preseason rankings at least once.

2. Travel between games must be plausible. You can't plan to go to a Pac-12 game on a Friday night and then expect to be in Big Ten country by noon Saturday.

Let the journey begin:

**Game 1:** No. 11 Oregon vs. No. 16 Auburn (Saturday in Arlington, Texas).

Opening week is usually full of mismatches, but with a few big nonconference games sprinkled in. This neutral-site clash — a rematch of the national championship game played in January 2011 — is the start of a crucial season for Auburn coach Gus Malzahn.

**Game 2:** California at No. 13 Washington (Sept. 7).

This isn't the day's marquee matchup by any means — not with LSU facing Texas and Clemson hosting Texas A&M — but the Huskies were a tough team to schedule for this exercise, with some big games on other dates running into conflicts. So we'll cross Chris Petersen's team off the list early. Also, Washington did lose to Cal a season ago.

**Game 3:** No. 1 Clemson at No. 22 Syracuse (Sept. 14).

The Orange are in the preseason Top 25 for the first time since the Donovan McNabb era. Their home opener at the Carrier Dome — or whatever it's called this season — is against Trevor Lawrence and the defending champs.

**Game 4:** No. 9 Notre Dame at No. 3 Georgia (Sept. 21).

Notre Dame's traditional rivalries with Southern California and Michigan are still going strong, but the game everyone seems to be pointing to for the Irish is this



Jim Lytle/AP

**Head coach Jimbo Fisher and No. 12 Texas A&M will host No. 2 Alabama on Oct. 12.**

trip into SEC territory. Georgia won at Notre Dame by a point in 2017.

**Game 5:** No. 23 Washington State at No. 14 Utah (Sept. 28).

Utah reached the Pac-12 title game last season, and Kyle Whittingham's team is favored to win the conference this year in the preseason media poll. Washington State needs to replace quarterback Gardner Minshew.

**Game 6:** No. 17 Central Florida at Cincinnati (Oct. 4).

After winning 12 games last season, Cincinnati hopes to halt UCF's two-year run of dominance in the AAC. This is the first of three two-game weekends on our itinerary.

**Game 7:** No. 18 Michigan State at No. 5 Ohio State (Oct. 5).

It's an easy drive from Cincinnati to the Horseshoe, and the Spartans and Buckeyes have pro-

vided some quality Big Ten slugs-fests in recent years.

**Game 8:** No. 2 Alabama at No. 12 Texas A&M (Oct. 12).

The Aggies' schedule includes the top three teams in the preseason poll — and only the Alabama game will be at Kyle Field. Keep an eye on the start time for Alabama-Texas A&M. If it's at night, then it may be possible for some fans to catch both that and the Oklahoma-Texas showdown earlier in the day in Dallas. (We'll leave the Red River Shootout off for now, though.)

**Game 9:** UCLA at No. 25 Stanford (Oct. 17).

Stanford beat UCLA 49-42 last year. This Thursday night matchup is too convenient to pass up.

**Game 10:** No. 7 Michigan at No. 15 Penn State (Oct. 19).

The day off between games means it's reasonable to fly from California to Pennsylvania. The reward is a big matchup in Happy Valley between two teams that traded blowouts the past three years. Michigan won 49-10 in 2016 and 42-7 last season. Penn State won 42-13 in 2017.

**Game 11:** No. 19 Wisconsin at No. 5 Ohio State (Oct. 26).

The Badgers were a disappointment last year. They get Michigan and Michigan State at home in 2019, so they could have a lot to play for when it comes time to face Ohio State on the road.

**Game 12:** No. 3 Georgia vs. No. 8 Florida (Nov. 2 in Jacksonville, Fla.).

The Cocktail Party hasn't been decided by single digits since 2013, but this year the game could be a must-see. Florida is coming off a 10-win season and



ANDY NELSON, THE REGISTER-GUARD/AP

**Quarterback Justin Herbert and No. 11 Oregon open their season Saturday against No. 16 Auburn in Arlington, Texas.**

pounded Michigan in the Peach Bowl. Georgia has played in two straight SEC title games and came agonizingly close to a national title two seasons ago.

**Game 13:** No. 6 LSU at No. 2 Alabama (Nov. 9).

The Tigers haven't beaten Alabama since that 9-6 game in 2011 when they were both undefeated, and last year the Crimson Tide rolled 29-0. But LSU may be the toughest opponent on Alabama's regular-season schedule, and on

a weekend without many other marquee games, this matchup stands out.

**Game 14:** No. 10 Texas at No. 21 Iowa State (Nov. 16).

Keep an eye on that Iowa State-Iowa game in September. If the Cyclones win that one, they could be on their way to a special season — and the same obviously applies to Texas if it can win its early showdown with LSU.

**Game 15:** TCU at No. 4 Oklahoma (Nov. 23).

The Sooners put up 52 points against Gary Patterson's TCU team last year, but this could be a trap game for Oklahoma before its regular-season finale at Oklahoma State. By this point, we should know if Jalen Hurts (or anyone else) has a shot to make it three straight Heisman trophies for the Sooners.

**Game 16:** No. 20 Iowa at No. 24 Nebraska (Nov. 29).

The last remaining teams on the list play each other on the day after Thanksgiving, and if things break right, that game could certainly have division title implications in the Big Ten. With all 25 teams now accounted for, we get a freebie: We can pick any game we want to attend the following day, provided it's a reasonable drive from Nebraska.

**Game 17:** No. 5 Ohio State at No. 7 Michigan (Nov. 30).

It's not a short drive from Lincoln to Ann Arbor, but since the Nebraska-Iowa game is in the afternoon, the trip is doable. With Urban Meyer out of the way, Michigan tries again to beat Ohio State for the first time under Jim Harbaugh.



RICHARD SHIRO/AP

**Running back Travis Etienne, right, and top-ranked Clemson travel to No. 22 Syracuse on Sept. 14.**

# COLLEGE FOOTBALL

## TOP 25 SCHEDULE

<b>Friday</b>
No. 18 Michigan State vs. Tulsa
No. 19 Wisconsin at South Florida
<b>Saturday</b>
No. 2 Alabama vs. Duke at Atlanta
No. 3 Georgia at Vanderbilt
No. 5 Ohio State vs. FAU
No. 6 LSU vs. Georgia Southern
No. 7 Michigan vs. Middle Tennessee
No. 10 Texas vs. Louisiana Tech
No. 11 Oregon vs. No. 16 Auburn at Arlington, Texas
No. 13 Washington vs. Eastern Washington
No. 15 Penn State vs. Idaho
No. 20 Iowa vs. Miami (Ohio)
No. 21 Iowa State vs. Northern Iowa
No. 22 Syracuse at Liberty
No. 23 Washington State vs. New Mexico State
No. 24 Nebraska vs. South Alabama
No. 25 Stanford vs. Northwestern
<b>Sunday</b>
No. 4 Oklahoma vs. Houston
<b>Monday</b>
No. 9 Notre Dame at Louisville

## SERVICE ACADEMIES

### Air Force (0-0)

vs. Colgate (0-0), Saturday

### Army (0-0)

vs. Rice (0-0), Friday

### Navy (0-0)

vs. Holy Cross (0-0), Saturday

## POWER FIVE STANDINGS

Atlantic Coast Conference Atlantic Division			
Conference	Overall	W	L
Clemson	0 0	0	0
Boston College	0 0	0	0
Syracuse	0 0	0	0
NC State	0 0	0	0
Florida St.	0 0	0	0
Wake Forest	0 0	0	0
Louisville	0 0	0	0
Coastal Division			
Virginia	0 0	0	0
Virginia Tech	0 0	0	0
Pittsburgh	0 0	0	0
Duke	0 0	0	0
Georgia Tech	0 0	0	0
North Carolina	0 0	0	0
Big 12 Conference			
Conference	Overall	W	L
Oklahoma	0 0	0	0
West Virginia	0 0	0	0
Texas	0 0	0	0
Texas Tech	0 0	0	0
Iowa St.	0 0	0	0
Oklahoma St.	0 0	0	0
Baylor	0 0	0	0
Kansas	0 0	0	0
Kansas St.	0 0	0	0
TCU	0 0	0	0
Big Ten Conference			
East	Overall	W	L
Michigan	0 0	0	0
Illinois	0 0	0	0
Penn St.	0 0	0	0
Michigan St.	0 0	0	0
Indiana	0 0	0	0
Rutgers	0 0	0	0
West			
Northwestern	0 0	0	0
Iowa	0 0	0	0
Wisconsin	0 0	0	0
Minnesota	0 0	0	0
Illinois	0 0	0	0
Nebraska	0 0	0	0
Pac-12 Conference			
Conference	Overall	W	L
Washington State	0 0	0	0
Stanford	0 0	0	0
California	0 0	0	0
Washington	0 0	0	0
Oregon	0 0	0	0
Oregon State	0 0	0	0
South			
Colorado	0 0	0	0
Arizona State	0 0	0	0
Utah	0 0	0	0
Southern Cal	0 0	0	0
Arizona	0 0	0	0
UCLA	0 0	0	0
Southeastern Conference			
Conference	Overall	W	L
Florida	0 0	0	0
Georgia	0 0	0	0
Missouri	0 0	0	0
Tennessee	0 0	0	0
Vanderbilt	0 0	0	0
South Carolina	0 0	0	0
Kentucky	0 0	0	0
West			
Arkansas	0 0	0	0
Louisiana	0 0	0	0
Alabama	0 0	0	0
Mississippi	0 0	0	0
Auburn	0 0	0	0
Texas A&M	0 0	0	0
Mississippi State	0 0	0	0



JOHN RAOUX/AP

Syracuse defensive back Andre Cisco, right, breaks up a pass intended for West Virginia quarterback Trey Lowe III during the first half of the Camping World Bowl game in Orlando, Fla. Here's a switch for Syracuse coach Dino Babers — defense rules. Known for his uptempo offenses, the fourth-year coach is looking to his defense to help lift the No. 22 Orange to even greater heights this fall.

## KEY POWER FIVE MATCHUPS

### Tulsa (3-9 last season) at No. 18 Michigan State (7-6)

Series record: First meeting.

**What's at stake?** — It's the first chance for Michigan State to show off any offensive improvements after the Spartans scored only 32 points in their last four games last season. The Spartans shuffled roles around among offensive assistants, and Brad Salem is now the offensive coordinator.

**Key matchup** — Michigan State QB Brian Lewerke vs. Tulsa's pass defense. The Golden Hurricane finished eighth in the nation in pass defense a season ago and return plenty of starters on that side of the ball. Lewerke played well in 2017 but threw only eight touchdown passes last year.

**Players to watch** — Tulsa: LB Cooper Edmiston was the team's leading tackler last season. He also had three interceptions, three forced fumbles and three fumble recoveries.

**Michigan State:** DE Kenny Wilkies returns after breaking his leg in the Redbox Bowl last year. He led the Big Ten in tackles for loss and received first-team all-league honors.

**Facts & figures** — Michigan State has won 20 consecutive home openers. ... Tulsa opens the season outside the state of Oklahoma for the first time since 2013, when it played at Bowling Green. ... Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio has 107 victories with the Spartans, two shy of Duffy Daugherty's school record. ... Tulsa RBs Shamari Brooks and Corey Taylor II combined for 1,813 yards rushing last season. They'll be up against a Michigan State defense that finished No. 1 in the nation against the run. ... Tulsa has options at QB. Seth Boomer started eight games last season. Zach Smith, who started 10 games in two seasons at Baylor, sat out last season after transferring. The Golden Hurricane also have redshirt freshman Davis Brin.

— Associated Press

### No. 19 Wisconsin (8-5) at South Florida (7-6) 1 a.m. CET, 8 a.m. JKT AFN Sports 2

Series record: Wisconsin leads 1-0.

**What's at stake?** — This is not a typical opener for the Badgers and Bulls, who both are coming off disappointing years and hoping to set the tone for bounce-back seasons. Wisconsin slipped to eight wins in 2018, failing to win 10 or more for the first time under coach Paul Chryst. South Florida started 7-0 and climbed into the Top 25 before finishing on a six-game losing streak. Wisconsin is the highest-ranked opponent USF has ever opened a season against at home.

**Key matchup** — Wisconsin RB Jonathan Taylor led the nation in rushing last season, finishing with 2,194 yards and 16 touchdowns. The 5-foot-11, 219-pound junior topped 200 yards rushing five times and has run for 4,171 yards in two seasons. USF's revamped defense was vulnerable against the run a year ago, yielding 247.5 yards per game on the ground — 11th among 12 teams in the American Athletic Conference.

**Players to watch** — Wisconsin: Inconsistent quarterback play hindered the Badgers a year ago. Junior Jack Coan started four games, including the team's 35-3 rout of Miami in the Pinstripe Bowl, and tops the depth chart heading into Friday night.

**South Florida:** Graduate transfer Blake Barnett, who began his career at Alabama and later played at Arizona State, is back for a second season with the Bulls. He completed 61% of his passes for 2,710 yards, 12 TDs and 11 interceptions.

**Facts & figures** — USF is 0-3 vs. ranked teams under Strong and 11-25 all-time, including 7-12 at home. ... Wisconsin won the only meeting between the schools, 27-10 at home in 2014. ... Bell led Valdosta State to last season's Division II championship with an up-tempo offense that averaged 523.9 yards and 52 points per game.

### No. 22 Syracuse (0-0) at Liberty (0-0)

Series record: First meeting.

**What's at stake?** — Syracuse made a huge jump last year with 10 wins after four straight sub-500 seasons and finished with its first national ranking since 2001. There are great expectations for this season, and with No. 1 Clemson lurking in two weeks, the Orange can't afford to get off on the wrong foot. For Liberty, the game marks the much-anticipated debut of coach Hugh Freeze, whose last coaching stop was at Ole Miss.

**Key matchup** — Liberty QB Stephen Calvert vs. the Orange defense. Calvert took a step back last season, going from 29 touchdown passes and six interceptions in 2017 to 21 TDs and 18 picks last year. Freeze has emphasized Calvert's need for better preparation and that figures to be tested against Syracuse, one of the national leaders with 31 forced turnovers a season ago.

**Players to watch** — Syracuse: QB Tommy DeVito. The redshirt sophomore rescued the Orange twice last season with stellar performances in relief of former starter Eric Dungey, but this will be his first start.

**Liberty:** WR Antonio Gandy-Golden. Calvert's classmate and favorite target has 19 receptions for 245 yards and five touchdowns in the last two season openers. For his career, the 6-foot-4, 220-pounder has caught 23 touchdown passes, all thrown by Calvert.

**Facts & figures** — Freeze's debut at Liberty is also the first time the Flames will play host to a Power Five school and a ranked opponent. It is also Liberty's first as a full-fledged member of the Football Championship Subdivision. ... Aside from Clemson, Liberty is the only FBS team that has a 3,000-yard passer (Calvert), a 1,000-yard rusher (Frankie Hickson) and a 1,000-yard receiver (Gandy-Golden) returning this year. ... In its last nine games when playing as a ranked team, Syracuse is 7-2. It also has a 7-5-1 record in season-opening games when ranked.



## NFL

# NFL camps give new life to some AAF exiles

By DAVE CAMPBELL  
Associated Press

EAGAN, Minn. — Karter Schult and his Salt Lake Stallions teammates were assembled one day this spring for what began as a position group gathering for the defensive linemen when someone in the room glanced at his phone.

Their employer, the American Alliance of Football, was halting operations just two months into its first and only season.

“The coaches didn’t know. Our general manager wasn’t at the facility at the time,” Schult said. “We were still skeptical. Then sure enough, we had a team meeting about 20 minutes later telling us that the league is gone.”

The news, mostly met with shrugs or smirks among sports fans across the country if not unnoticed altogether, sent the players into quite the scramble, perhaps none more disrupted than Schult. The 25-year-old defensive end, who is currently with the Minnesota Vikings, the fourth NFL team that has had him on the roster, was a mere four days away from getting married when the announcement came.

Fortunately for Schult, a former FCS star at Northern Iowa, he wasn’t going to be out of a job.

His agent had a verbal agreement with the Vikings, who were already interested in signing him after the AAF season ended. The Vikings had a contract waiting for Schult, but he had to pass the requisite physical exam at headquarters first.

Even though the wedding was in Iowa, their home state, making it to Minnesota prior to the ceremony would have been too tight.

“We were trying to go home and set up the venue and stuff, and I didn’t want to give my wife a heart attack,” Schult said, “so I asked if they could move it back a week. The Vikings were gracious enough to wait.”

Well, at least for a little while. “My wife went on the honeymoon without me,” Schult said, smiling.

As he joined his new teammates for offseason workouts, Schult’s bride Marissa took the two-week trip to Italy with another family member. The newlyweds will wait for the next soft spot on the pro football calendar to take their official voyage as husband and wife.

At the end of this week, more than 800 players around the NFL will be unemployed as teams reduce their rosters for the games that count. Most of them will re-



PETER JONELEY/AP

**Former Salt Lake Stallions defensive end Karter Schult, right, celebrates a sack with Stallions teammates. Now with the Minnesota Vikings, Schult is one of dozens of fringe players in NFL training camps this month who played in the Alliance of American Football before the league suddenly folded in April.**

turn to the not-so-glamorous, reliably nomadic lifestyle of working out on their own, driven by the hope their agent will get another call from an NFL club.

Another developmental league will commence next year, the reprise of the XFL, which will try

to avoid the fate of the AAF, the latest failed league to land on the scrap heap of alternatives to the NFL. That doesn’t mean the experience was for naught, though.

“In the offseason, what you want to do is right your wrongs,” said Denver Broncos cornerback

De’Vante Bausby, who played for the San Antonio Commanders. “So, what better way to right your wrongs than actually playing? That’s how I looked at it.”

Enduring the chaos and disappointment ought to serve these players for the better as long as their professional football career lasts.

The experience Memphis Express players had was as rough as any, with some players purportedly stuck with hefty hotel bills when the AAF was suspended. Center Demetrius Rhaney, who signed with the Buffalo Bills earlier this month after spending time with the Express, wound up with an invoice for an MRI.

“They don’t know who to get in contact with to pay it,” Rhaney said. “So I might just bite the bullet.”

When he picked up the mail, he was hoping it was one last paycheck.

“But it was a bill. The total opposite,” Rhaney said. He added: “If that’s the price I have to pay to get game film, it’s well worth it.”

That’s the way it has to be for these dream chasers.

“You never know when your last opportunity will come about,” Schult said, “and you’ll play your last snap of football.”

STARS AND STRIPES

# NFL CHALLENGE

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## NFL



TONY DEAN/AP

**Browns running back Kareem Hunt, left, will not be permitted inside the team's facility while serving his eight-game ban. The team had petitioned the NFL to allow Hunt to be around his teammates, arguing he could use the extra support.**

## Browns RB Hunt can't be with team during suspension

By TOM WITHERS  
Associated Press

CLEVELAND — Kareem Hunt will have to spend his NFL suspension isolated from his team.

The suspended Browns running back, who must serve an eight-game ban for physical altercations, will not be permitted inside the team's facility starting Saturday at 4 p.m., league spokesman Brian McCarthy said Wednesday in an email to The Associated Press.

The team had asked Commissioner Roger Goodell to allow Hunt to be around his teammates, arguing he could use the extra support. But to this point, Hunt will not be able to interact with his teammates or staff inside the team's building in Berea, Ohio, until his punishment ends in November.

It's not impossible the league could adjust its policy and amend its stance on Hunt, who was signed as a free agent by Cleveland in March, three months after being released by the Kansas City Chiefs. But to this point, he's going to be on his own.

Hunt was suspended for two violent off-field incidents, one in which he shoved and kicked a woman during a dispute in a hotel hallway.

Browns quarterback Baker Mayfield was disappointed to learn Hunt won't be present.

"It hurts him not to be around there because if you can be around your teammates, that can help you keep a positive attitude, and that definitely helps," Mayfield said. "So that's tough to hear."



AP

**The New England Patriots' Rob Gronkowski was one of the athletically gifted players who paved the way for the current crop of pass-catching tight ends.**

# Steelers' roster hopefuls keep faith

Safety Kelly was concerned when AAF folded in spring, but now he's closing in on spot

By WILL GRAVES  
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pressure is relative. So forgive Kameron Kelly if the Pittsburgh Steelers safety isn't getting caught up in whether he'll still have a job in the NFL once teams pare the rosters from 90 to 53 on Saturday afternoon.

"I just ball," Kelly said Tuesday. "These are all my brothers. I don't want any of us to get cut."

The reality of playing professional football for a living, however, won't allow it. Brotherhood aside, Kelly is well aware of the cutthroat nature of the business. He lived it last spring while playing for the San Diego Fleet of the Alliance of American Football.

One afternoon, Kelly was in a meeting with his Fleet teammates when he stepped outside during a quick break and opened up Twitter on his phone. The news wasn't good. The fledgling league was broke. He was out of a job. So was everyone else in the building.

So Kelly bailed. Immediately. Not even bothering to take any of the modest swag the players were given. Called his mom, his dad and his agent, then went back to his hotel room and slept.

When he woke up, he headed to Mexico for a three-day vacation wondering if any realistic shot at reaching the NFL was over. Now that's pressure. Wondering if he's going to stick with the Steelers — an opportunity he wasn't sure would materialize when the AAF went belly-up — not so much.

Besides, Kelly probably doesn't need to be concerned. He's done so well while playing both safety spots in addition to carving out a role in nickel and dime packages he's almost certain to survive cut day. Not that he wants to talk about it.

"I don't ever want to think I have it on lock," Kelly said. "I always want to play with that chip on my shoulder because I feel like that chip is what helped me elevate my game. So that chip is going nowhere."

Maybe, but three dozen of the men Kelly shared the field with on Thursday night will be. While stars like Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger and cornerback Joe Haden can turn their attention to the season opener at New England on Sept. 8, the majority of players who were expected to see extended playing time against Caro-



JAMES KENNEY/AP

**Steelers defensive back Kam Kelly, top left, celebrates with linebacker Bud Dupree after the Titans' Marcus Mariota was sacked in the end zone for a safety on Sunday.**

lina were hoping to make a compelling argument for gainful employment, whether it's in Pittsburgh or elsewhere.

Linebacker Tuzar Skipper's stat line during the preseason is impressive: three sacks in three games. Yet there's also another number he's concerned about: zero. That's the number of snaps on special teams he's taken. For a guy trying to lock down the 52nd or 53rd roster spot by showing how versatile he can be, that's not great.

Asked what he feels he needs to show the coaching staff, Skipper — an undrafted rookie who attended an open tryout for the CFL's Hamilton Tiger-Cats in the spring before eventually making his way to Pittsburgh — didn't hesitate.

"Play special teams," he said with a laugh before pointing out he was a "War Daddy" on kickoff coverage while playing collegiately at Toledo.

Still, Skipper is optimistic. He believes he's done enough to earn a look elsewhere if Pittsburgh doesn't work out. He'd prefer, however, not to have to pack up and move. The trip to Carolina offers an opportunity

to put more things on tape, things besides just getting to the quarterback.

At 24, Skipper has the luxury of time. At 27, Dontae Spencer might not. The 5-foot-8 wide receiver/kick returner spent four years in the CFL, setting career highs in receptions (81), yards receiving (1,007) and touchdowns (seven) last summer while playing for the Ottawa Redblacks.

He could have chosen to stay in the CFL, which offers job security if nothing else. Yet he promised himself he'd give the NFL another shot even if he knew the odds weren't great. He hasn't disappointed. He's caught two passes for 15 yards, turned a pair of reverses into 48 yards rushing, averaged a healthy 14.7 yards per punt return and his 35-yard kickoff return is the team's longest of the preseason.

The numbers game, however, could make it tough for him to stick. To keep Spencer, the Steelers might have to cut Eli Rogers, Ryan Switzer or third-round pick Dontae Johnson. Switzer is a veteran who's earned Roethlisberger's trust. Rogers is more familiar with the system and Johnson was the 66th overall pick in the draft.

## Threats: Best tight ends pose matchup problems for linebackers, defensive backs

FROM BACK PAGE

The best tight ends these days are too fast for linebackers to defend, and too big for defensive backs to cover. Teams often are sending tight ends on vertical routes, forcing safeties to run with them and leaving cornerbacks isolated on receivers to create deep problems for defenses.

Titans tight end Delanie Walker, entering his 14th season, has noticed players at his position have become more like wide receivers.

"Guys aren't blocking," Walker said. "You don't see the traditional tight end on the end of the line anymore. If he's a star, he's usually in the slot catching passes. That's a difference from 10 years ago."

Even though tight ends are often lined up on the outside, Saints coach Sean Payton said players at the position who can also block near the line of scrimmage always will be valued because of the importance they can have in the running game.

"The ones that end up in the Hall of Fame

are probably guys that did both pretty well," Payton said.

Rob Gronkowski excelled at catching and blocking for New England during his nine-year career, which ended with his retirement last spring. Lions coach Matt Patricia said Gronkowski's impact up close for eight seasons and has witnessed the evolution of how multiple tight ends are deployed on any given snap.

"That's probably one of the bigger changes that has happened in the game throughout the past 15 years," Patricia said.

When Patricia was starting his NFL coaching career, he saw a lot of two-back, two-receiver formations with one tight end with his hand in the dirt or turf. As the game has changed, Patricia sees more schemes putting two tight ends on the field — usually one in place of a fullback — to take advantage of their ability to make plays in space with two receivers and one running back as part of the formation.

"Where the game has really evolved and changed is where those tight ends have much more of a wide receiver skillset," Patricia said.

It's not exactly unheard of to have such players. Kellen Winslow, Charlie Sanders and Shannon Sharpe are in the Hall of Fame — and not for their blocking acumen.

Desperate to add a difference-making player at the position, Detroit drafted T.J. Hockenson with the No. 8 pick overall in April. That was the earliest a tight end has been selected since San Francisco took Vernon Davis sixth overall in 2006.

The Lions weren't alone in April, making a first-round investment in a tight end who was a teammate of Hockenson's at Iowa. The Broncos drafted Noah Fant in the first round, taking a pair of tight ends off the board in the first 20 picks for the first time since the league went to 32 picks in 2002.

And yes, both from the same school, because pass-catching tight ends are so in vogue.

## SPORTS

**Fraught with frustration**  
NCAA transfer rulings bring relief,  
angst » College football, Page 57



**Zach Ertz**  
**Eagles**

\*116 receptions  
1,163 yards receiving  
8 touchdowns

\*NFL record



**Travis Kelce**  
**Chiefs**

103 receptions  
1,336 yards receiving  
10 touchdowns



**George Kittle**  
**49ers**

88 receptions  
\*1,377 yards receiving  
5 touchdowns

The San Francisco 49ers' George Kittle is part of a new breed of tight ends who are used more like wide receivers.

AP

# Game changers

Talented trio shows how NFL tight ends are evolving as pass-catching threats

By LARRY LAGE  
Associated Press

**T**he day before Tony Gonzalez was inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame this month, he was asked about being something of a pioneer at tight end. A guy who changed his position — and the game itself.

Gonzalez sort of shrugged. "I guess everyone is doing it now," he admitted of tight ends being used in a manner that Gonzalez didn't exactly invent, but certainly perfected.

The pass-happy, vertical-stretching NFL is shifting away from relying heavily on formations with one tight end in a three-point stance. Instead, many teams feature offenses with one tight end next to a tackle on the line while sending a

tight end to the slot or spread out even wider in some formations.

Star tight end Jason Witten, who returned to the Cowboys after one year working on "Monday Night Football," said Gonzalez, whose 17-year career ended in 2013, changed things with his route-running and pass-catching skills at the position.

"Gonzalez kind of paved the way of my generation of, 'All right, this is a mismatch,'" said Witten, who will get strong consideration to join Gonzalez in Canton one day.

Two of the best active tight ends are coming off record-breaking seasons, and another one just had the best year of his career.

Eagles star Zach Ertz made 116 receptions, a season record by a tight end.

San Francisco's George Kittle had 1,377 yards receiving, setting another record at the position.

Two-time All-Pro tight end Travis Kelce was spectacular as well, setting career highs in catches (103), yards receiving (1,336) and touchdowns (10) last season.

Kittle, 25, keeps track of peers on his iPad, studying every move made by most of the starting tight ends. He takes a particularly close look at how Kelce, 29, and Ertz, 28, are perhaps the best in the business at the position.

"I just try to pull stuff from them," Kittle said. "Ertz and Kelce are two of the top guys in the league, so if I can learn something from them, I can get to that level, too."

**SEE THREATS ON PAGE 63**



**Inside:**

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■ Former AAF players getting another chance, to play football, Page 62

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